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THE SALT OF LIFE.

MR. HOPKINSON

An Original Farce in Three Acts

BY

R. C. CARTON

Richard Claude Critchett

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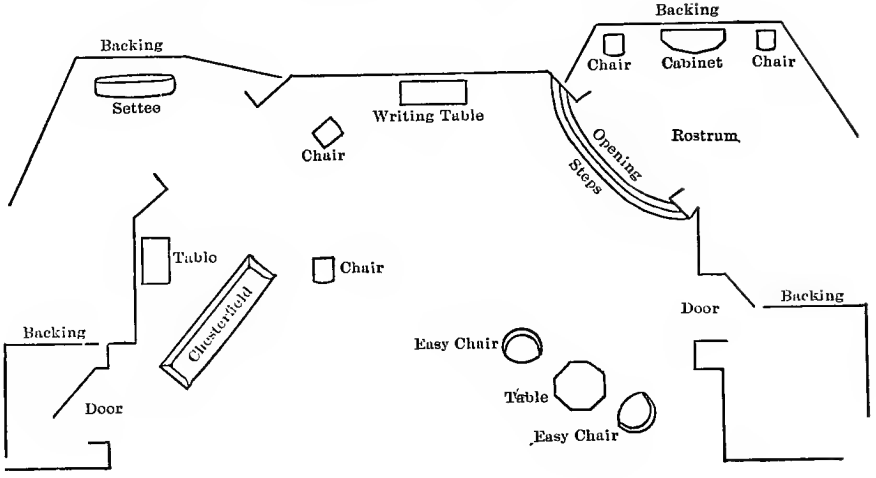

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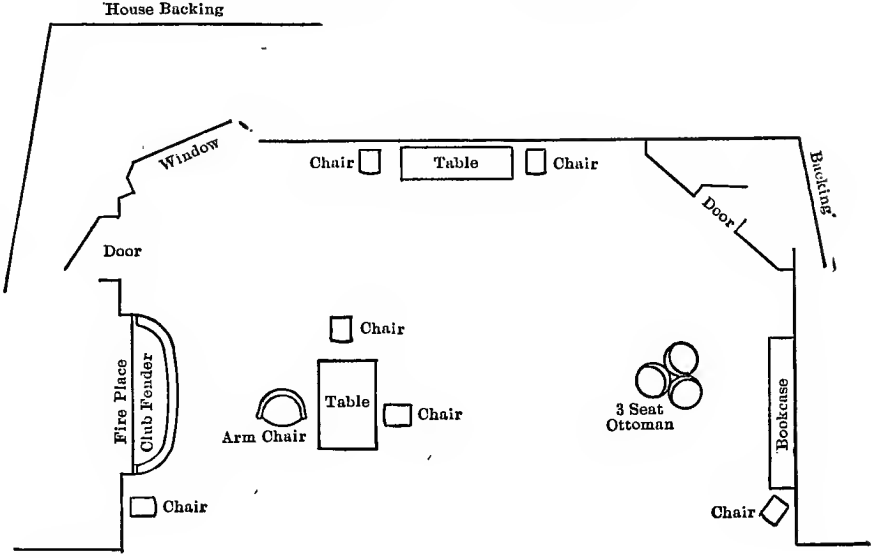

All the Costumes, Wigs, and Properties used in this Play may be hired or purchased reasonably from C. H. Fox, Ltd., 27, Wellington Street, Strand, London.

Characters.

Produced at the Avenue Theatre, London, on February 21, 1905, with the following cast:

MR. HOPKINSON

Duke of Braceborough	Mr. Fred. Kerr
Earl of Addleton (his brother-in-law)	Mr. Henry Kemble
Hon. Otho Dursingham	Mr. W. Graham Brown
Lord Gawthorpe	Mr. Athol Stuart
Mr. Smethurst (Duke of Braceborough's lawyer)	Mr. Chas. Allan
Parbury (Duke of Braceborough's butler)	Mr. Herbert Druce
Blisset (Earl of Addleton's valet)	Mr. Henry Stephenson
Samuel Hopkinson	Mr. James Welch
Duchess of Braceborough	Miss Compton
Lady Thyra Egglesby (Earl of Addleton's daughter)	Miss Ellen O'Malley
Eliza Dibb	Miss Annie Hughes

SCENE.

ACTS I. AND II.

Winter Garden in Duke of Braceborough's Town House.

ACT III.

Library in Duke of Braceborough's Town House.

There is an interval of 6 months between Acts I. and II. and one night between Acts II. and III.

Property Plot.

ACT I.

Winter Garden of the Duke's House.

FANCY WICKER FURNITURE.

3 Wicker Tables.
2 Square and 1 round.
3 Easy Chairs, wicker.
Chesterfield Couch and 3 cushions.
" Hopkinson " Chair, C.
6 Large Palms.
6 Moorish Stools for same.
4 Pairs of Light Curtains for Openings.
Small Chippendale Cabinet in Recess L.
" " Settle " " B.
2 Cigarette Boxes.
2 Glass Match Stands.
2 Ash Trays.
Blotting Pad, Ink Stand, etc., on Table C.
6 Illustrated Papers on Table R.
Telegraph Forms " " C.
2 Moorish Lanterns.
Bell Push, L.

ACT II.

SAME SCENE.

2 Small Coffee Cups and Saucers on Salver off L. U. E.
Letters for Duchess.
" Globe " Newspaper on Salver, off L. U. E.
Cheque Book for " Hopkinson."
Electro-plated tea-tray.

ACT III.

THE DUKE'S LIBRARY.

Handsome Dark Oak Furniture.
Carpet down over stage.

Carpet Square down.
Large Oak Table up C. (5 x 3) filled with wedding presents.
Small Oak Table down R.
Grandfather's Arm-chair.
6 High-backed Chairs.
2 Arm-chairs.
3-Seat Ottoman.
Dark Red Curtains for window.
Fireplace R.
Club Fender, Dogs and Fire-irons.
4 Old Oil-paintings.
Large handsome Clock.
4 Blue and White China Ornaments for Mantel-piece.
"Times" Newspaper for Duke.
Illustrated paper for Dursingham.
Small Black Bag containing two deeds and letter.
Bracelet, Locket, Mug and bundle of letters for Bliss.
Jewel Case for Hoppy.
Letters for Duke.
3 Palms in window R.
6 Rugs.
2 Cheque Books.
Bell push on fireplace.
Plenty of Electro-plated Stuff to represent Wedding Presents.

ACT I.

ELECTRIC AND LIMES.

Floats, Battens, } Full up. Amber & White.
8 White Lengths to Openings and Doors.
2 Moorish Lanterns.
Bell Push. L.

ACT II.

SAME SCENE.

Full up, same as Act 1.
2 Lanterns to be lighted.

ACT III.

Full up.
White lengths to Doors.
Fireplace lighted.

ACT I.

LIMES.

Pale Amber from Perches.
2 White Limes behind Transparency R., Colours Required, Pale Amber, Oak Amber and Red.

ACT II.

Pale Amber from Perches.
2 Deep Blue Limes behind Transparency.

ACT III.

Pale Amber from Perches.
2 White Limes behind Window R.

MR. HOPKINSON.

ACT I.

(*Winter garden in the London house of the* DUKE OF BRACEBOROUGH.
Scene, according to plan.
It is afternoon, when the curtain rises, and LADY THYRA EGGLESBY *and* LORD GAWTHORPE *are discovered. He is sitting. She is strolling about.*)

THYRA. (*at table* R. *Pausing for a moment*) You can't see your way?

GAWTHORPE. (*on sofa* R. C. *Leisurely lighting a cigarette*) Afraid not.

THYRA. I think you're wrong—we should hit it off extraordinary well. (*moves to back of sofa* R.)

GAWTHORPE. That isn't the point.

THYRA. You know I suit you.

GAWTHORPE. Yes.

THYRA. You know you suit me.

GAWTHORPE. I've never doubted that. Fact is, my dear old girl, considering how busy I am just now, I've thought about you to an appalling extent.

THYRA. (*sitting by him*) Not really?

GAWTHORPE. (*steady*) Oh yes—I've given a lot of time to you one way and another.

THYRA. Awfully decent of you.

GAWTHORPE. Oh no—(*hands cigarette case to her*)—but it comes to this, you must marry.

THYRA. If I haven't married, it's your fault.

GAWTHORPE. Oh no—come.

THYRA. I've been out three seasons, and I've had a very fair sprinkling of offers.

GAWTHORPE. Very fair indeed.

THYRA. But, on the whole, you and I didn't think any of 'em would do.

GAWTHORPE. No, we didn't, but I'm not certain we were wise in chucking Ribbledene.

THYRA. Lord Ribbledene! Musty old beast. (*lights a cigarette*)

GAWTHORPE. Yes—but he goes in heavily for Egyptology—and does his chipping and burrowing on the spot—he'd have been abroad a good bit—(*slight pause*)—we were hasty over Ribbledene. You see the present state of things is rather rough on the Duchess. She has trotted you about for three years with nothing to show for it.

THYRA. I don't fancy Auntie minds.

GAWTHORPE. Perhaps not—she's a dear thing. I've sometimes thought of getting her to chaperone me for a bit.

THYRA. It wouldn't be fair to Otho Dursingham—live and let live.

GAWTHORPE. Then, there's the Duke.

THYRA. Uncle doesn't count.

GAWTHORPE. I suppose he doesn't.

THYRA. Auntie runs the lot of us—you see—I never had a mother that I can remember—so, when the Governor took over the Embassy at Madrid, he handed me to Auntie to do the best she could with. Just before he started, he said he was too old a traveller to carry any unnecessary luggage—he said luggage, but he looked at me, and I think he meant baggage. Auntie gave

me a clinking good start—but I've rather hung on hand.

GAWTHORPE. My doing?

THYRA. Pretty much.

GAWTHORPE. I know—we must—(*rises and crosses* L.)—pull ourselves together and be sensible.

THYRA. (*rises*) I suppose—it really wouldn't—square with your notions to marry me yourself—(*pause—He turns and looks at her*)

GAWTHORPE. My dear child, I've lived with myself for thirty (C.) years, so I can safely say that, if I hated the sight of a woman, I wouldn't play her such a dirty trick as to marry her to my old friend, Lord Gawthorpe—(*sits* R. *of table* L.)—and I don't hate the sight of you.

THYRA. (*again leaning against him*) Don't you?

GAWTHORPE. Steady! No—I'm sorry to say I don't.

THYRA. Then, let's muddle along as we are. (*going up* C.)

GAWTHORPE. No, as I said before—it isn't fair to the Duchess—she's been a wonderful pal to me—and for no particular reason—I've known her ever since the old days when I was at Oxford, and I never even made love to her.

THYRA. Why didn't you? (*up* C)

GAWTHORPE. Oh well, we're both rather busy people. She must feel I'm keeping you back—and that isn't cricket, so there mustn't be any more early morning rides. (*rises and crosses to sofa* R.)—tea shop appointments—and all that—you must take the next decent offer that comes along. (*kneeling on sofa*)

THYRA. Very well—but I shall hate it. (*behind sofa* R.)

GAWTHORPE. So far as that goes, so shall I.

THYRA. (*eagerly putting her hand on his shoulder*) Will you, dear old fellow?

GAWTHORPE. Steady! Steady! Do remember you're not on your own yet. (*rises*)

THYRA. I'll try. (*puts cigarette on table* R.)

(THE DUKE *comes in,* L. U. E.)

GAWTHORPE. (*crosses up* C.) That's better—I must be getting along—Hulloa Duke!

THE DUKE. How are you, Gawthorpe? Ah, Thyra! (*to* GAWTHORPE) Didn't see you at Ascot.

GAWTHORPE. Oh Lord no—couldn't manage it—been settling up over my last legal flutter—

THE DUKE. (*up* C.) That little divorce business?

GAWTHORPE. Yes—just got the lawyer's bill.

THE DUKE. I can sympathize—I should tax it to the last comma. (*at table up* C.)

(THYRA *is looking at paper on table* R.)

GAWTHORPE. I mean to—but if anything of the sort ever crops up for me again, I shan't defend—it's throwing good money away. Did you stay down the whole week? (*moves to back of table* L.)

THE DUKE. Practically. (*up* C.)

GAWTHROPE. At the Wentworth Daubeney's, I suppose?

THE DUKE. Er—yes—they were good enough to find me a corner—there were some very agreeable people there—and they all did their best to make it pleasant for me.

GAWTHORPE. Including Mrs. Daubeney—What?

THE DUKE. Quite so.

GAWTHORPE. Wentworth Daubeney was there too, you said.

THE DUKE. Yes—Daubeney was there—incidentally.

GAWTHORPE. Duke, it's a good thing my moral character is so firmly established, or I couldn't afford to see much of you.

(THYRA *laughs.*)

THE DUKE. Too bad—too bad really—(*moves down* C.) Thyra, don't laugh. You should wait till you're married, before seeing a joke of that description.

GAWTHORPE. (*going up* L. C.) I've just been saying the same kind of thing to her. Good bye—old girl, mind what I said to you—Good bye, Duke. Do we meet to-night?

THE DUKE. Er—where would that be? (*goes up with* HIM)

GAWTHORPE. (*up* C.) At the Cecil—the Duchess is giving some of us a bit of dinner.

THE DUKE. Is she? No, I'm afraid I can't manage it—I'm sorry—the Duchess does these little things so well.

GAWTHORPE. Yes, she doesn't poison you—especially when Dursingham is there to keep an eye on the wine list.

THE DUKE. Fortunately, she can usually rely on his co-operation—

(THEY *laugh.*)

Good-bye.

(GAWTHORPE *nods carelessly and goes out.*)

(THE DUKE *pauses a moment in thought and then strolls over to* THYRA.)

THE DUKE. Delightful chap, our friend Gawthorpe—

(THYRA *nods.*)

He said something about having given you a little advice. (*puts bills on table* C.)

THYRA. He's given me a lot.

THE DUKE. Really! (*sits*) As to what? (*sits on sofa* (R., *up end*)

THYRA. He says it's time I found some unfortunate suitable man, and dragged him up the aisle of St. George's.

THE DUKE. Very considerate of Gawthorpe.

THYRA. (*back of sofa* R.) He says—or implies, that if I don't watch it, I shall get left—and that I'm not doing Auntie much credit.

THE DUKE. Ah!

THYRA. He also seems to think that he and I have been seen about too much together—that, in a general way, it checks the growth of orange blossoms.

THE DUKE. Ah! well now, Thyra, as you know, I interfere in family matters, as seldom as possible. I leave all that to the Duchess, but, speaking in a friendly way, I really think you should listen to Gawthorpe.

THYRA. All right. If Auntie can get a bird to rise inside my range, I'll do my best to wing it—but I'm not a particularly good shot.

THE DUKE. (*rises*) Nothing could be fairer than that—I'll tell her—she must beat up a new covert or two—I wouldn't intrude a single suggestion that might have the aspect of selfishness, but, if you could—er—aim straight this time, it would be a great convenience to me.

THYRA. How's that?

THE DUKE. I have heard from your father—at least Smethurst has heard from him. He always communicates through Smethurst, when he wants to be more than usually offensive. He deals with certain legal matters which I needn't touch upon—and he finally mentions you.

THYRA. What have I done? (*moves to front of sofa and sits*)

THE DUKE. Nothing—that is what he com-

plains of. He is apparently most indignant that we haven't found you an eligible archangel with a heavy rent roll, and a blameless past. The last item reminds me that he has the infernal assurance—excuse me, Thyra—

THYRA. Not at all.

THE DUKE. (C.) The assurance to object to the inclusion of Gawthorpe among our friends—

THYRA. Oh, does he?

THE DUKE. (C.) Gawthorpe! One of the few modern fellows I thoroughly like—and, if his moral path has been a little zig-zag—is Addleton in a position to throw even a pebble at him—Addleton! Why, when one remembers his own big scandal in '85—when one remembers—(*pauses*) —my dear Thyra, I beg your pardon, I was forgetting he's your Father. (*turns to* HER)

THYRA. Go ahead—what happened in '85?

THE DUKE. No—no—it was inexcusable of me to refer to anything of that sort and—we needn't discuss your Father's vagaries. (*looks at his watch*) Later than I thought. Do you suppose there is the faintest far-off chance of my getting ten minutes chat with the Duchess?

THYRA. I don't know—she was going to a lot of places this afternoon.

THE DUKE. I wonder if she'd see me in parenthesis. (*crosses to bell above table* L.)

THYRA. You might try.

THE DUKE. I think I will. (*rings,* L.) When you are happily married, my dear child, as I hope you shortly will be—you'll find, however much you and your husband may each be occupied with your own affairs, it's just as well to see something of one another now and then.

(PARBURY *comes in,* L. U. E.)

Oh—er—is her Grace at home?

PARBURY. I believe so, your Grace.

THE DUKE. Well, ascertain, beyond a doubt, will you?

(PARBURY *going.*)

And, in the double event of her being at home, and at leisure, say I should be much indebted, if she could spare me a few minutes.

PARBURY. Yes, your Grace.

THE DUKE. All right.

(PARBURY *goes out,* L U. E.)

As I was saying, (*crosses* R. C.) domesticity is a tender plant that needs constant attention. Now, in spite of the innumerable claims upon the time, both of the Duchess and myself, we have practically made it a rule, *never to meet less than* once a week. *Never—or very rarely less than* once a week.

THYRA. I know.

THE DUKE. You'll find the convenience of it, if it's only for half an hour. There are so many little things that get forgotten.

(THE DUCHESS *comes on,* L. U. E)

Family stock taking is an admirable institution.

THYRA. All right, Uncle, when the time comes, I'll bear it in mind.

THE DUCHESS. (*on steps* L.) Want me?

THE DUKE. (*turns round, and sees* THE DUCHESS) Now, really, this is wonderfully good of you.

THE DUCHESS. (*comes down*) Oh no—by an extraordinary chance, I had a few minutes to spare—so I answered your message myself—er—how are you?

THE DUKE. Amazingly well, thanks. How are *you? (shaking hands)*

THE DUCHESS. Rather fagged. (*sits* L. *of table* L.)

THE DUKE. (C.) You would be. I fully intended to send up for news of you when I got back two days ago—but somehow, even important things slip one's memory.

THE DUCHESS. Oh, that's all right—Thyra, did you go to the Dillington's?

THYRA. No—does it matter?

(THE DUKE *goes up* C. *to table.*)

THE DUCHESS. I promised Mrs. Dillington that some of us would show up—but perhaps life is rather short for the Dillington's.

THE DUKE. Thyra, I'm afraid I must get rid of you—my time is terribly restricted, and I must say a word or two to your Aunt.

THYRA. (*Rises and goes round back of sofa. Crosses it* R. U. E.) Well, if you think you're both to be trusted without a chaperone—I'll go and try on a new hat or two.

THE DUKE. Do, and think over my—er—homily—I've been giving Thyra a little lecture on the domestic virtues.

THE DUCHESS. *That isn't your usual form.*

THE DUKE. (*Not as a rule—I'm breaking out in a new place.*)

(THYRA *smiles and goes out,* R. U. E.)

THE DUCHESS. Have a good time at Ascot?

THE DUKE. Socially, yes—financially, no.

THE DUCHESS. Couldn't you manage to sort out a few winners?

THE DUKE. No. (*coming down,* C.)

THE DUCHESS. It's a bad backer's week, as a rule.

THE DUKE. This was no exception.

THE DUCHESS. Well, one can't have it every way. How is Mrs. Daubeney?

THE DUKE. Very fit indeed. (L. C.)

THE DUCHESS. Did she wear any pretty frocks?

THE DUKE. I suppose so—but she clings too much to green.

THE DUCHESS. She does rather.

THE DUKE. I loathe green.

THE DUCHESS. Anything special to talk to me about?

THE DUKE. I'm afraid I must bother you with a budget of vexatious problems.

THE DUCHESS. That sounds bad—won't they keep?

THE DUKE. (*sits* R. *of table* L.) Hardly—unless the present opportunity is inconvenient.

THE DUCHESS. Not in the least. I've got half an hour—then Pigache is coming to do something to my hair—he's quite an artist but his experiments leave one rather limp—go on—

THE DUKE. (*takes letter from pocket*) Well—I've had an annoying letter from Eton—the headmaster doesn't seem satisfied with Silwood—(*reads*) He says—after the usual preliminaries—During the present year, your son, Lord Silwood—has devoted such modicum of energy and intellect as he possesses—you know that's offensive—

THE DUCHESS. Very.

THE DUKE. Intellect, as he possesses—to the breaking of most of the school regulations—and has apparently none left for the—what's the word—putrefaction—no—prosecution—of his studies—particularly offensive—therefore it is my disagreeable duty to inform your Grace—that, in the event of Lord Silwood failing to obtain his remove at the commencement of next Term—we shall be compelled to request your Grace to relieve us of the thankless duty of er—

some damned word I can't make out—but you can see the gist of it.

THE DUCHESS. I don't know what the man means—Silwood's a dear boy—but of course he won't stand the bearing rein—I suppose they've been trying to teach him things.

THE DUKE. Very possibly—that kind of element has crept in lately at many of the public schools.

THE DUCHESS. I think we'd better have Silwood home, and get him a private tutor, who understands his position.

THE DUKE. I think so too—well, that disposes of that. Now, we come to our perennial problem—finance! In that direction the outlook is—well, strictly speaking, there isn't any outlook—it isn't so much that we want money, but every infernal tradesman seems to want it too—and want it aggressively. (*hands bills to* THE DUCHESS) You might just look over these, when you have five minutes to spare. One is so perpetually taking one's custom elsewhere that it isn't easy to remember who one is dealing with. (*rises, and goes up* C.)

THE DUCHESS. Yes. I've had to break with Clotilde—it's hard luck of course—she's the only woman in London who knows how to make one look smart without making one look hideous—but she sent in an account that had only been running three years.

THE DUKE. (*up* C.) Only three years! Bless my heart.

THE DUCHESS. One couldn't stand that, don't you know—so I'm trying Laurent, but it'll take months to get her into line—and then very likely the same difficulty may arise again.

THE DUKE. I shouldn't wonder.

THE DUCHESS. I don't quite see what one can

do—if you remember we converted half the diamond necklace and two thirds of the tiara into paste—I'll do anything I can and if you say the other half of the necklace—and even the other third of the tiara must go—

THE DUKE. (*drops* C.) Certainly not—the offer is a noble one— but I won't hear of any further sacrifice in that direction—No—what I would suggest is this—I've had an offer to let Glentochty—for the shooting—rich American and all that kind of thing—you don't want the usual gathering this year—particularly, do you?

THE DUCHESS. Not a bit—glad of a rest.

THE DUKE. Quite so—thought you would be —then, I'll close with the offer—. What are your autumn plans? (*going up to table* C.)

THE DUCHESS. Cowes—and then a few visits. You'll go to Marienbad, I suppose?

THE DUKE. Yes—I shall get such little shooting as I want at the Churtons.

THE DUCHESS. The Churtons—I promised to give them a week in October—very likely we shall meet.

THE DUKE. (*moves* C.) That would be delightful—you must come out with the guns one day, and have a chat—sure to have a few things to talk over by then.

THE DUCHESS. (*rises, and crosses* R., *with bills*) I will—(*slight pause*)—there doesn't seem to be anything conspicuously tragic about your problems.

THE DUKE. Ah—wait a moment—I'm sorry to say there's Addleton.

THE DUCHESS. Has he cropped up again?

THE DUKE. Had a note from Smethurst—you know how we stand with Addleton over the Castle mortgage?

THE DUCHESS. I know in a general way—I

don't pretend to understand legal matters. (*sits on sofa* R., *down stage*)

THE DUKE. He's held a very stiff mortgage on Braceborough Castle for years—and now the besotted old ruffian talks about foreclosure—Smethurst says it couldn't have come at a less propitious time—money everywhere is as tight as a drum—and I'll be damned—I beg pardon, I mean dashed—if I altogether see my way. (*sits on sofa* R.)

THE DUCHESS. What's gone wrong with Addleton?

THE DUKE. He isn't pleased about Thyra.

THE DUCHESS. Thyra?

THE DUKE. Says she ought to be married by this time—implies that you've been a trifle slack.

THE DUCHESS. Slack! I've taken her to everything worth going to for the last three years, and, from the moment we entered a room, I've been careful never to set eyes on her again till it was time to go.

THE DUKE. Quite so.

THE DUCHESS. I've avoided every conservatory, and dark corner where she might be lurking—often to my own serious inconvenience—merely to give her every chance.

THE DUKE. Precisely.

THE DUCHESS. As to introductions, I've taken every one who was eligible by the collar, and pitched him straight at her—but marrying, for the moment, is demodé—the best men aren't doing it.

THE DUKE. All that, has been strongly emphasized in a previous correspondence with Addleton.

THE DUCHESS. Then, what is it he wants, or doesn't want?

THE DUKE. He naturally wants everything that is unreasonable. He wants a son-in-law,

who is rich—and he also makes it a sine qua non that the man shall have no past.

THE DUCHESS. No past!

THE DUKE. I fancy even one divorce would be prohibitive.

THE DUCHESS. Would it? Ah—Addleton doesn't understand the state of the present day market.

THE DUKE. Scalded dog, I imagine—His old '85 trouble rankles perhaps, and in that connection, I may mention that he considers Gawthorpe an unsuitable associate for Thyra—and would like us to strike him off our visiting list.

THE DUCHESS. Why, dear old Gawthorpe wouldn't hurt a fly—at any rate not an unmarried fly.

THE DUKE. Just what I contend. No fellow I have a greater regard for—but do you think there is any chance of placing Thyra advantageously—there's no doubt this threatened foreclosure is a nuisance and Addleton practically links the two questions together. (*rises*)

THE DUCHESS. I'll tell you what—I'll talk it over with Otho Dursingham—he might have an inspiration.

THE DUKE. Don't think you could do better —(*crosses* C.) I'm ashamed to hustle you, but the matter is rather pressing.

THE DUCHESS. The man must be rich?

THE DUKE. Very rich—and no past.

THE DUCHESS. Is he supposed to have a family?

THE DUKE. No past of any kind. (*gets letters from table* L., *and goes up* C.)

THE DUCHESS. I mean would Addleton take a middle class man, who complied with the other conditions?

THE DUKE. I assume he *would* (*up* C.)

THE DUCHESS. All right. I'll talk to Otho. (*rises*)

THE DUKE. (*coming down,* C.) It's particularly good of you. (*looks at watch*) Dear me! how quickly time goes in congenial company. Afraid I must run away—Hope I haven't been a nuisance?

THE DUCHESS. Not at all.

THE DUKE. You're giving a little dinner at the Cecil to-night—aren't you?

THE DUCHESS. Yes—by the by, will you come?

THE DUKE. Afraid I can't—sorry—nothing I should like better—but—

THE DUCHESS. Are the Daubeneys back in town?

THE DUKE. Yes.

THE DUCHESS. (*smiling*) Oh, well then, some other time—good-bye.

THE DUKE. Good-bye—so fortunate to find you at leisure. (THEY *shake hands.*)

(DURSINGHAM *comes in, and meets* THE DUKE, *who is going* L. U. E.)

DURSINGHAM. Hulloa, Dook!

THE DUKE. My dear Dursingham, delighted to see you.

(THE DUCHESS *goes up to writing-table,* C., *behind sofa* R.)

DURSINGHAM. Fancy meeting you here. (*on steps,* L.)

THE DUKE. I'm just off—in fact I'm rather late—I've been obliged to bore the Duchess with a lot of tedious business matters.

DURSINGHAM. I'll put that right.

(THE DUKE *is going.*)

Did you do any good at Ascot?

THE DUKE. My dear fellow, no—want to forget it—good-bye. (*goes out*)

(DURSINGHAM *strolls over to* THE DUCHESS *and sits lazily.*)

DURSINGHAM. Dook looks well.

THE DUCHESS. Yes, he does—the last time I saw him—when was that? I suppose about three weeks ago—I remember thinking he was (*crosses over* L., *below table* L.) *looking rather seedy*—but he always pulls round.

DURSINGHAM. (*after pause*) Well, dear.

THE DUCHESS. Otho, I'm down on my luck. (*sits* R. *of table* L.)

DURSINGHAM. How's that? (*sitting on edge of table* L.)

THE DUCHESS. We're going to let Glentochty this year.

DURSINGHAM. You don't say that! Then, where the Devil, am I to get my shootin'?

THE DUCHESS. There isn't any help for it.

DURSINGHAM. What's the matter? Coin?

THE DUCHESS. Coin—among other things.

DURSINGHAM. Was that the Dook's business chat?

THE DUCHESS. Yes—He's rather worried—you see for one thing he's had a bad Ascot week—then Silwood has got into a row at Eton—Addleton is behaving like a brute over the Castle mortgage—nobody seems to want to marry Thyra—and Mrs. Wentworth Daubeney will go on wearing green.

DURSINGHAM. Poor old Dook!

THE DUCHESS. You don't think you could lend a hand—I always fall back on you when affairs are more wobbly than usual.

(THE DUCHESS *leans her hand on* DURSINGHAM'S.)

DURSINGHAM. I know you do (*rises*) but a

chap has got to realise his limitations. For instance, you don't catch me saying anything unpleasant to Mrs. Daubeney about her frocks—not even to oblige the Dook—why she'd think no more of firin' me out than if I was Daubeney. (*opens cigarette box*)

THE DUCHESS. Oh, that's all right—Thyra is the great difficulty—somehow she doesn't quite get there.

DURSINGHAM. No, she doesn't—and yet I know a lot of chaps who think well of her—if she was once married I fancy she'd go ahead and do herself credit. (*lights a cigarette*)

THE DUCHESS. Yes—and her marriage would put us right with Addleton.

DURSINGHAM. Oh, would it?

THE DUCHESS. He wants something rather special—the man must be very rich—and his story mustn't have any back numbers to it—no past—and that sort of thing, don't you know.

DURSINGHAM. Addleton don't ask much. (*moves to front of table*)

THE DUCHESS. Of course, it's hideously unreasonable.

DURSINGHAM. Any objection to the man bein' a third rate bounder?

THE DUCHESS. Not a bit.

DURSINGHAM. I mean a chap who is clean outside our radius. (*sits* L. *of table* L.)

THE DUCHESS. That could be got over—Have you any notion?

DURSINGHAM. I'm thinkin'. What do you say to Hopkinson?

THE DUCHESS. What would anybody say to Hopkinson? Who is Hopkinson?

DURSINGHAM. You've never heard of him?

THE DUCHESS. Never.

DURSINGHAM. Why, the papers have been full

of him. He even crowded out the correspondence —" Is divorce still popular?"

THE DUCHESS. But what is he?

DURSINGHAM. He's the very latest financial sensation.

THE DUCHESS. South Africa, or American?

DURSINGHAM. Neither—he's Home growth—he was livin' out his feeble little life in one of the suburbs, when a colonial uncle died, and left him chunks of bullion—

THE DUCHESS. What was he exactly—before he inherited?

DURSINGHAM. He was in a stores—some local tradesman had tacked on butcher's meat and chandlery to his original establishment and called it the something or other stores—Hoppy was the book-keeper.

DURSINGHAM. What's a book-keeper?

DURSINGHAM. The chap in the rabbit hutch who takes the money. I believe he started behind the counter originally, but we never mention that. I happened to drop across him—it was through Charlie Renton, but that don't matter—anyway he's rather taken to me and I'm teachin' him some of the rules of the game.

THE DUCHESS. I suppose you make it a matter of business?

DURSINGHAM. Yes—but one has to play light with him (*rises*) he's had what's called a sound commercial education—His parents, the late Mr. and Mrs. Hopkinson—took particular care to impress on him the value of fourpence halfpenny —to boil it down into plain English, he's a mean little swine.

THE DUCHESS. But, if he's come into all this money—

DURSINGHAM. That's where it is—he can't rise to it—he *does* know the value of fourpence halfpenny, but the fortune is beyond him—even in a

little thing like cab fares, you can't depend on him. (*sitting on sofa*)

THE DUCHESS. Would he do for Thyra, by any chance?

DURSINGHAM. That's what struck me.

THE DUCHESS. No past?

DURSINGHAM. Oh no—Hold on—he talks to me, don't you know—and he tells me there *was* some girl—in his own line of life—who was what he calls his fiarncy—by the by I'm sorry to say he took a few French lessons before I could stop him—but you must steer him clear of that.

THE DUCHESS. (*moves to back of sofa,* R.) Certainly—but about the girl?

DURSINGHAM. I understand he's chucked her—and the whole thing didn't amount to a row of beans—Well now, what do you say?

THE DUCHESS. It sounds rather healthy—when will you bring him along?

DURSINGHAM. You can see him now if you like—I keep him at the end of a string. I told him to call for me here—I've got to give him his orders for the evening—as a rule he dines with me—at least I dine with him—but to-night, there's your feed at the Cecil.

(PARBURY *comes in,* L. U. E.)

THE DUCHESS. Would you like to bring him with you?

DURSINGHAM. Oh Lord no—I shall be glad of a night off.

PARBURY. A gentleman has called for you, sir.

DURSINGHAM. *That's him* (*to* THE DUCHESS) Shall he come up?

THE DUCHESS. By all means.

DURSINGHAM. Fetch him up, will you?

(PARBURY *goes out,* L. U. E.)

THE DUCHESS. (*rising*) Hadn't I better give

you five minutes with him before he sees me? (*behind chair,* C.)

DURSINGHAM. Well, I think it would be better—He'll about jump out of his boots at the notion of being presented to Her Grace the Duchess of Braceborough—you may as well give him a little margin.

THE DUCHESS. (*going*) All right.

DURSINGHAM. What shall I do, if he turns faint?

THE DUCHESS. (*moves to door,* R. U. E.) Ring for sal volatile—let him see our intentions are hospitable—I'll come back in a minute or two. (*goes out,* R. U. E.)

(*Slight pause.*)

(PARBURY *comes in, followed by* HOPKINSON.)

PARBURY. Mr. Hopkinson.

DURSINGHAM. Ah, Hoppy!

(PARBURY *goes out,* L. U. E.)

Found your way here?

HOPKINSON. (*moves down,* C.) Yes, Mr. Dursingham—I called as requested, but I hope my being here is no inconvenience—I could have waited in the hall or on the pavement.

DURSINGHAM. Rot—sit down and make yourself at home—the people here are very decent and they're old friends of mine—will you have anything?

HOPKINSON. (*sits* L. *of table* L.) No, thank you—I never take anything between meals.

DURSINGHAM. Hoppy—I'm afraid you were properly brought up.

HOPKINSON. My late parents were very careful in impressing upon me the importance of—er—

DURSINGHAM. Have a cigarette? (R. C.)

HOPKINSON. Oh, I've smoked my cigarette to-

day—and I got through it very fairly considering I'm fresh to it—ever since you pointed out that society would expect it of me, I've persevered in spite of a naturally weak stomach. (*slight pause*) This is a very beautiful residence, if I may take the liberty of submitting the remark.

DURSINGHAM. Yes, it isn't a bad old shanty. Have you any notion where you are?

HOPKINSON. No, Mr. Dursingham.

DURSINGHAM. This is the town house of the Dook of Braceborough.

HOPKINSON. What! (*rises*)

DURSINGHAM. He and the Duchess are old friends of mine, especially the Duchess—I've been talking about you to her—she wants to know you.

HOPKINSON. What!

DURSINGHAM. She wants to know you—she'll be back in a minute.

HOPKINSON. (*rises, and moves unsteadily up stage*) I think if you'll excuse me—not feeling quite myself—sudden change in the weather.

DURSINGHAM. (*stopping him*) Don't be a silly ass—you'll be great pals.

(BOTH *above table,* L.)

HOPKINSON. Great pals with—Her Grace the Duchess of Braceborough?

DURSINGHAM. Why not? (*pulls flower out of* HOPKINSON'S *coat, and throws it away*) I've said a good word for you, and she listens to me—Now pull yourself together and try not to look so much like a boiled chimpanzee—you want a free pass to the best set, don't you? Well, the Duchess can give it to you.

HOPKINSON. I shan't know myself.

DURSINGHAM. Praps not, but you'll know everybody else.

HOPKINSON. But I haven't had a minute for

preparation—I should have liked a little time to throw a few ideas together.

DURSINGHAM. You won't want 'em. She'll see to all that—you just jump in, and she'll tell the man where to drive—I've made it all right.

HOPKINSON. I'm sure I have to thank you, Mr. Dursingham for all your disinterested kindness.

DURSINGHAM. Don't name it—(*moves up* C.) —I like doin' little things of this sort—think I hear her—

HOPKINSON. (*moves to steps,* L.) Oh my goodness, do you—I—I suffered last year with prickly heat—and I feel as if it was coming on again. (*on steps,* L.)

(THE DUCHESS *comes in,* R. U. E.)

DURSINGHAM. Buck up—I tell you it's all right—Duchess—this is my friend Mr. Hopkinson—Hoppy—this is the Duchess of Braceborough.

THE DUCHESS. (R. C.) Very pleased to know you, Mr. Hopkinson. (SHE *shakes hands with* HIM. *Moves down behind sofa,* R. *and sits*)

HOPKINSON. Oh—er—reely, your Grace—I—er not quite prepared for the honour—perhaps I might take the liberty of calling again—this day week—

DURSINGHAM. Buck up—(L. C. *to* THE DUCHESS) Fact is, Duchess, I s'pose I ought to have broken you to him a bit more gently—but I tell him you won't eat him.

THE DUCHESS. Oh no—there's no danger of that—I'm on a very careful diet just now. Come and sit down, Mr. Hopkinson.

HOPKINSON. If I'm not taking up your Grace's time—

THE DUCHESS. Not in the least.

(HOPKINSON *timidly puts hat and stick on table* L.)

Now, Otho, suppose you run away, and let Mr. Hopkinson and I see if we can learn to keep step.

DURSINGHAM. Righto—see you eight thirty—Cecil—(*on steps* L.)—Good-bye, Hoppy, come round to my place to-morrow—and we'll map out the day.

HOPKINSON. (*rising hastily, going up after* HIM) Mr. Dursingham, you're not going—surely you—won't leave us—

THE DUCHESS. Why not—three is a stupid number when two people wish to get better acquainted.

DURSINGHAM. (*aside*) There—do you hear that? She's taken to you, and she ain't easy to please—I fancy it's your tone and manner that has knocked her.

HOPKINSON. (*also aside*) Think so?

DURSINGHAM. Sure of it—go in and win—(*to* THE DUCHESS)—till eight thirty.

THE DUCHESS. All right.

(DURSINGHAM *goes.*)

(*Slight pause.*)

Now, Mr. Hopkinson, let's try again—sit down.

(HOPKINSON *moves down* L., *and sits on edge of chair* L. *of table.*)

Not in the next county—we don't want to shout at each other.

(HOPKINSON *rises, and sits on chair* R. *of table, and finally sits on chair* C., *top end of sofa.*)

That's better—well now, Otho has been telling me about you. It seems you're quite a celebrity.

HOPKINSON. A celebrity, your Grace—oh no—

THE DUCHESS. Oh yes.

HOPKINSON. Well, at any rate, only in a very small way. I'm only a two ounce packet at present.

THE DUCHESS. Tell me, what does it feel like to find yourself overwhelmingly rich quite suddenly—

HOPKINSON. It's rather like the first time you go on the shutes at the Earl's Court Exhibition —I don't know if your Grace often goes on the shutes—

THE DUCHESS. Not often—

HOPKINSON. Well, it was like that—I had—as you may say, no capital—beyond a little something in the Savings Bank—and then all in a minute there it was—of course to anybody like your Grace, money is no object.

THE DUCHESS. I wouldn't say that—when the great event happened, you were living at—at—?

HOPKINSON. Tooting.

THE DUCHESS. Tooting?

HOPKINSON. Tooting—of course, your Grace, when I say Tooting—I mean Upper Tooting—does your Grace know Tooting?

THE DUCHESS. Not intimately.

HOPKINSON. It's a rising suburb—but terrible cleeky.

THE DUCHESS. Streaky?

HOPKINSON. Cleeky—French term—for stand-offish—I've been told most suburbs are a bit that way—

THE DUCHESS. Are they?

HOPKINSON. There are people among 'em, who look at you as if you weren't fit to ride in the same tram—

THE DUCHESS. That must be rather inconvenient—by the way—I haven't asked you, will you have anything?

HOPKINSON. Much obliged, your Grace—not between meals.

THE DUCHESS. Cigarette?

HOPKINSON. (*rises, and crosses to table* L., *takes cigarette, and back to chair* R.) I'm not the smoker I could wish to be—I do put on a cig. now and then—but the fact is I've rather a weak st—er—er—Goodness mercy—

THE DUCHESS. What's the matter?

HOPKINSON. Nothing—your Grace—I nearly —oh nothing—I—won't smoke just now, if you'll excuse me. (*puts cigarette behind ear, and sits*)

THE DUCHESS. You're not living at—er—Tooting now, I suppose?

HOPKINSON. Oh no, your Grace—I'm up in Town—I've got a couple of very nice rooms—got 'em cheap—the late occupier happened—luckily for me—to commit suicide—

THE DUCHESS. Really—and how do you get through your time?

HOPKINSON. I'm a bit unsettled at present—Mr. Dursingham has been taking me about—we generally dine at one of the restorongs—they stick it into you at the restorongs—don't they—then we go on somewhere—the Empire—or that kind of thing.

THE DUCHESS. Do you like the ballet?

HOPKINSON. Ye-es, I'm er—beginning to get over it—

THE DUCHESS. But all that is by the way—what are you going to do with your fortune?

HOPKINSON. Oh, it's jolly well invested—no one can teach me much about figures—it comes out nearer forty thousand a year than thirty—

THE DUCHESS. I fancy I'm beginning at the wrong end—I ought to have asked what are you going to do with yourself?

HOPKINSON. With myself?

THE DUCHESS. What do you want to do—what do you want to be—we're all aiming at some target or other though we don't always find the Bullseye—what's your target?

HOPKINSON. Well, your Grace—if you'll overlook my presumption—I should say my target was society.

THE DUCHESS. I thought it might be.

HOPKINSON. Of course, I know I don't start fair—my father was most respectable—Collector of water rentals—and Church Warden but there's no sort of doubt he was—a bit—com.

THE DUCHESS. Com?

HOPKINSON. And my mother too—she was clever—her lemon puddings were the talk of the family—but the partiality of a son don't blind me to the circumstance that *she* was just—a bit—a bit—

THE DUCHESS. Com?

HOPKINSON. A bit com—

THE DUCHESS. But I gather your parents are—are no longer with us?

HOPKINSON. No, your Grace—they've been so to say wafted—that was some years ago—Father first—Mother was wafted ten months later.

THE DUCHESS. Very well then.

HOPKINSON. To go back to what we were saying—I know I'm in for a stiff job—Society is a big hill to climb—one might say mountain.

THE DUCHESS. You haven't travelled much, have you?

HOPKINSON. Week-end once at Bulleon.

THE DUCHESS. Ah—if you had ever done any Alpine climbing you would know that the first thing to do is to engage a guide—

HOPKINSON. A guide? Think I follow you—you mean it's the same with Society.

THE DUCHESS. Only more so—

(*Slight pause.*)

HOPKINSON. Your Grace—

(*Again slight pause.*)

your Grace—I should dearly like to say something—only—I—don't want to find myself on the wrong side of the Ledger—

THE DUCHESS. Shall I say it for you? You'd like me to haul you up the mountain—isn't that it?

HOPKINSON. Your Grace has exactly spotted it, only I hadn't the face to ask it.

THE DUCHESS. All right—I'll do what I can.

HOPKINSON. I don't know how to thank your Grace—

THE DUCHESS. Well, but I shall expect you to give me a free hand—in the first place, you must do everything I tell you.

HOPKINSON. Only too much honoured.

THE DUCHESS. What's your temper like?

HOPKINSON. I think I may say pretty good.

THE DUCHESS. It'll have to be—when you spent that week-end abroad, you found everything very different, didn't you?

HOPKINSON. I did, your Grace.

THE DUCHESS. You must understand that will be just the same when you come among us—you'll find everything is different. Our notions are different—you mentioned that your late father was respectable—

HOPKINSON. Highly respectable, your Grace.

THE DUCHESS. He probably would be—well, that's fatal.

HOPKINSON. Fatal?

THE DUCHESS. In society—or at least among us—which is not quite the same thing—you may be almost anything you like but respectable.

HOPKINSON. How am I to manage to throw it off?

THE DUCHESS. With a little practice it'll come to you.

HOPKINSON. If your Grace will only condescend to teach me—

THE DUCHESS. I'm putting you through your alphabet now—you'd wish to be married, of course.

HOPKINSON. Married, your Grace?

THE DUCHESS. Properly married.

HOPKINSON. I should wish the ceremony to be strictly legal.

THE DUCHESS. No—no—I mean advantageously—to someone who would give you a certain stamp.

HOPKINSON. Does your Grace mean a nob?

THE DUCHESS. I meant a title certainly.

HOPKINSON. My crumbs—but—I could hardly look as high as that, could I?

THE DUCHESS. Let me see—your income is—?

HOPKINSON. Forty thousand.

THE DUCHESS. Forty—

HOPKINSON. Thousand.

THE DUCHESS. I don't see any reason why it shouldn't be managed on that—by the by, you haven't any entanglements, I suppose? In an ordinary way, it wouldn't matter, but I have a special reason for asking.

HOPKINSON. Well, there was a young person—

THE DUCHESS. Only one?

HOPKINSON. Only one, your Grace, I assure you—

THE DUCHESS. That's very moderate.

HOPKINSON. We met—as one may say—casual—at Hampton Court—she was skirt hand in one of the best millinery establishments—and for a month or two it was love's young dream—but I

often had a kind of passing doubt whether she was worthy of me—if we had a day out together, she seemed to think a man ought to be made of money—whenever it rained she always wanted to cab it home—till she gave me a fair sickener—so that, when I came into the fortune, I saw my duty plainly before me—I wrote at once and told her—that all was over—and she must take it at that.

THE DUCHESS. Did she take it at that?

HOPKINSON. No, she didn't—she came round to my place and lost all respect for herself in the passage—that was a bit too thick, so I opened the door—bowed—because I wasn't going to let her make me forget I was a gentleman—(*rises*)—I bowed and said—Bunky Doodle—

THE DUCHESS. That sounds conclusive.

HOPKINSON. Haven't seen her since. (*sits again*)

THE DUCHESS. Has she any letters of yours?

HOPKINSON. One or two, and a couple of acrostics—I happened to throw off—but I understood her to say she'd burnt 'em.

THE DUCHESS. That's all right.

HOPKINSON. One of the acrostics was rather neat—my first is neither loss nor gain—my second blooms in sunny Spain—my third—

THE DUCHESS. Mr. Hopkinson, do you carry a note book?

HOPKINSON. Yes, your Grace. (HE *takes out note-book*)

THE DUCHESS. I want to give you a few—

HOPKINSON. Orders—er—instructions? (*rises, and puts hat and stick on chair* C.)

THE DUCHESS. Suggestions—First of all, will you kindly put down change of address—

HOPKINSON. I beg pardon?

THE DUCHESS. I don't know your present address—

HOPKINSON. Just off the Hampstead Road—

THE DUCHESS. Wherever it is, it obviously won't do.

HOPKINSON. Won't do?

THE DUCHESS. No, you'd better go to the Carlton till we can find you a decent flat.

HOPKINSON. (*sits*) The Carlton Hotel—that's rather steep, isn't it?

THE DUCHESS. I understood you to imply you would like us to take you up.

HOPKINSON. I would, your Grace.

THE DUCHESS. Very well—then, you must be prepared to find us rather expensive. Have you got the Carlton down?

HOPKINSON. Wish I could—(*writes*)

THE DUCHESS. Put down two motors—you'll want more, but we can begin with two.

HOPKINSON. Two motors?

THE DUCHESS. And a yacht—

HOPKINSON. I'm a very uncertain sailor—

THE DUCHESS. Really? Ah, that's a pity, but you must have a yacht—

(HOPKINSON *writing.*)

and you'll want a different tailor, of course—

HOPKINSON. Oh then, your Grace thinks that none of these things will do? (*rises*)

THE DUCHESS. Oh no.

HOPKINSON. Not even the boots?

THE DUCHESS. (*inspects them*) Oh no—but don't worry—Otho shall see to things for you—I'll speak to him.

HOPKINSON. Thank you, your Grace—(*sits, writes, then reads*)—Carleton—Motors—Yacht—Tailor—any other item?

THE DUCHESS. I think I can get you a little villa I know of at Nice—Lady Cheynely is giving it up—yes—you can put down villa at Nice.

HOPKINSON. Nice? that's out beyond Edgeware, isn't it?

THE DUCHESS. South of France.

HOPKINSON. South of France! But I mightn't want to go there.

THE DUCHESS. Oh yes, you would—in any case some of us would use it for you.

HOPKINSON. South of France! Such a long way off.

THE DUCHESS. It's nearer than Tooting—put it down—

(HOPKINSON *writes.*)

that disposes of my few little suggestions—now as to general hints—we dealt with respectability —and economy didn't we.

HOPKINSON. I think your Grace said they were to be dropped.

THE DUCHESS. Please.

(HOPKINSON *makes a note.*)

and by the way—we all talk slang now-a-days, but it's constantly changing, and perhaps your slang may be a little bit ahead of the fashion—at the same time till we catch you up—it might be as well to—

HOPKINSON. I hope I didn't say anything low, your Grace—

THE DUCHESS. Not at all I assure you—but as I said there is a fashion in these things—and the abbreviation "com" for instance is not as yet universally recognized—

HOPKINSON. Not com?

THE DUCHESS. Not com—

(HOPKINSON *writes.*)

and there was another expression—Bunky something—

HOPKINSON. Bunky Doodle, your Grace.

THE DUCHESS. Exactly—I like it myself—and I've no doubt it will become generally popular by and by—but till then—

HOPKINSON. Not Bunky Doodle?

THE DUCHESS. (*rises*) Not Bunky Doodle—

(HOPKINSON *writes, rises.*)

If you remember, I asked you for news of your temper—I hope I haven't tried it too severely.

HOPKINSON. My dear Grace—er—any little hint you give me—I take in the spirit in which it's meant—as to slang I'm not likely to get shirty over a trifle of that kind.

THE DUCHESS. Ah well, we mustn't expect to do everything at once—Afraid I must send you away now.

HOPKINSON. (*picking up hat and stick*) Certainly—hope you'll always give me the tip if I'm outstaying my welcome.

THE DUCHESS. You're not—but I've got half a hundred things to do before I dress. You must come again in a day or two—Otho will bring you—and we can map out a campaign—I must make you known to the Duke.

HOPKINSON. Too much honour reely.

THE DUCHESS. Oh no—I'll certainly mention your name to him the next time I see him—I don't know when that is likely to be—(*crosses* L.)—but I won't forget—and I should like you to know Gawthorpe—he's an old friend of ours.

HOPKINSON. Lord Gawthorpe?

THE DUCHESS. Yes.

HOPKINSON. Wasn't he—didn't I read about his being mixed up in the—er—Blazeby Divorce case—hope your Grace will excuse me—but wasn't he the Co?

THE DUCHESS. Yes he was.

HOPKINSON. Didn't the jury disagree? (C.)

THE DUCHESS. Oh yes, they did—it was a

great triumph for Gawthorpe—dear old fellow—we gave him a dinner on the strength of it—Well, you must let us hear from you soon. (*crosses to bell below table* L.)

(THYRA *comes in,* R. U. E.)

I'll write to you at the Carlton—oh—one moment—this is my niece—

THYRA. In law—

THE DUCHESS. Niece-in-law, Lady Thyra Eglesby—Thyra, this is my friend, Mr. Hopkinson.

(THYRA *bows.*)

(HOPKINSON *also bows very elaborately.*)

HOPKINSON. Most happy to know your ladyship.

(*Enter* FOOTMAN L. U. E.)

(THYRA *goes up a little.*)

Well, your Grace—won't detain you—know you're busy—shan't forget your friendly hints—got my note book—Good-bye, your Grace—thenks for all favours—(*shakes hands*)

THE DUCHESS. Good-bye.

(HE *goes up.*)

HOPKINSON. (*to* THYRA) Good-bye, your ladyship. (*he offers to shake hands with* THYRA *who turns away*) Hope to have the pleasure of meeting you again.

(THYRA *bows and sits on sofa.*)

(*bows*)—*he finally bows again to* THE DUCHESS *and then goes*)

(*Slight pause.*)

THE DUCHESS. Well, I suppose I must go to Pigache.

THYRA. Oh, I say, Auntie,—(THYRA *is sitting on lounge*)

THE DUCHESS. (*pausing*) Yes?

THYRA. Why did you introduce me to that fearful little bounder just now?

THE DUCHESS. Mr. Hopkinson?

THYRA. Yes.

THE DUCHESS. He's awfully rich, and I thought it just as well to make him known to you—because you may have to marry him—

THYRA. Marry him?

THE DUCHESS. One has to do these little things don't you know—think him over.

(*As the* DUCHESS *goes out,* L. U. E., *the curtain falls.*)

ACT II.

(*Same scene—Six months later—It is after dinner—the* DUCHESS *and* THYRA *are discovered*)

(FOOTMAN *is handing round coffee.*)

THE DUCHESS. (*up at table* C., *reading letter*) Getting used to the notion?

THYRA. (*sitting* R. *of table* L.) Which notion?

THE DUCHESS. To-morrow.

THYRA. No, I'm not.

THE DUCHESS. That's a pity.

THYRA. Well, you wouldn't like to be going to marry a little insect like Hopkinson, would you?

THE DUCHESS. It's very sporting of you—but I think you're doing the best for yourself—

THYRA. I know that—only it's like having a bad tooth seen to—the gold stopping comes after a time—but the nerve has got to be killed first.

THE DUCHESS. (*crosses to sofa and sits, up*

stage) Don't spoil your last unmarried evening—luck has rather stood to you—if we hadn't had a wire from your father saying he meant to stop at Dover for an hour or two and come on by a later train—we couldn't have had Gawthorpe to dinner—I arranged that—

THYRA. It was intensely decent of you.

THE DUCHESS. I like to make things pleasant all around when I can—oh that reminds me about your maid—

THYRA. Yes.

THE DUCHESS. Of course, we gave her that fortnight's holiday—and, of course she went home and promptly had the measles—she never struck me as being altogether trustworthy—

THYRA. But you're going to let me have Rawlin—

THE DUCHESS. Yes, you shall have her to tide you over—but while I was being tried on at Laurent's to-day, she mentioned a young person who had been for a time in her establishment—and said she was quite recommendable—so I told Laurent to send her along—because anyway you must let me have Rawlin back after the honeymoon—

(THYRA *gets up hastily and moves away, up* C.) What's the matter?

THYRA. It isn't fair to talk about honeymoons so soon after dinner.

THE DUCHESS. They are nasty things.

THYRA. (*up at table* C.) Can you remember your own?

THE DUCHESS. Vaguely.

THYRA. (C.) What was it like?

THE DUCHESS. I was bored—I believe I was more completely bored than the Duke but it was a near thing between us—(*to* PARBURY, *who has entered,* L. U. E.) What is it?

PARBURY. A young person sent by Madame Laurent wishes to see your Grace.

THE DUCHESS. (*to* THYRA) Ah, that's the young woman I told you of—we'd better see her—what?

THYRA. (C.) I think so.

THE DUCHESS. Yes—(*to* PARBURY) Bring her up, will you?

(PARBURY *bows and goes out.*)

Has Laurent sent the dress?

THYRA. Yes. (*moves to back of sofa* R.)

THE DUCHESS. Is it all right now?

THYRA. I think so.

THE DUCHESS. Has she seen to the sleeves? They were too bulgy.

THYRA. (*behind sofa*) Yes.

THE DUCHESS. Laurent is generally dependable, but her sleeves do bulge.

(PARBURY *comes in followed by* ELIZA, L. U. E.)

PARBURY. The young person, your Grace.

THE DUCHESS. Quite so—(*to* ELIZA) Will you come this way?

(ELIZA *advances.*)

(PARBURY *goes out.*)

You're from Laurent's, aren't you?

ELIZA. Yes, your Grace.

THE DUCHESS. What is your name?

ELIZA. (C.) Eliza.

THE DUCHESS. No—your other name—the one we should call you by—

ELIZA. Oh—er—er—Brown—

THE DUCHESS. Brown?

ELIZA. Brown, your Grace.

THE DUCHESS. You've never been anybody's maid before—have you?

ELIZA. I obliged a lady customer of Madame Laurent's for three weeks last summer, your Grace—and I believe gave satisfaction.

THYRA. (*behind sofa* R.) You can dress hair?

ELIZA. Yes.

THYRA. Competently—without grubbing it up by the roots—because I've got none to spare.

ELIZA. I took lessons at Dorin's.

THE DUCHESS. Really? That sounds hopeful—you can do dressmaking of course.

ELIZA. I think my skirts would satisfy your Grace.

THYRA. Blouses?

ELIZA. Morning blouses.

THE DUCHESS. That's useful in these hard times—then apparently you quite understand your business.

ELIZA. Yes, your Grace.

THYRA. And know when to mind it?

ELIZA. The lady I obliged for three weeks—was—a foreigner.

(*Pause.*)

THYRA. (*aside to the* DUCHESS) I'll take her. (*leaning over back of sofa*)

THE DUCHESS. (*also aside*) I was thinking how well she'd suit me.

THYRA. No—no—let me have her.

THE DUCHESS. All right. (*aloud to* ELIZA) My niece, Lady Thyra Egglesby is prepared to engage you.

THYRA. Yes.

ELIZA. Thank you, my lady—

THYRA. The only thing is I'm going to be married to-morrow—

ELIZA. To Mr. Hopkinson—

THYRA. Oh, you know that?

ELIZA. I saw it announced in the papers, my lady—

THYRA. Yes—well, he doesn't matter—but we're going abroad and, of course, you'd go too —so could you begin your duties now?

ELIZA. Madame Laurent told me I might be wanted at once, my lady—and I brought my box with me on the chance.

THE DUCHESS. Ah, that's very lucky—(*above table* L.)—will you ring the bell—it's over there—

(ELIZA *crosses and rings bell.*)

(*aside to* THYRA) I think she'll do you very well indeed—(*aloud to* ELIZA) Mrs. Northolt the housekeeper will tell you all about meals and hours and wages and all the little things of that kind—and I don't think you'll find Lady Thyra severe in the matter of followers.

THYRA. (*up at table* C.) Many as you like—only as we're going on the Continent, you'll have to pick 'em up and drop 'em, as you go along.

ELIZA. Thank you, my lady—that will be quite satisfactory.

(PARBURY *comes in.*)

THE DUCHESS. And my maid Rawlin will show you the Trousseau—oh—er—Parbury—will you take this young woman to Mrs. Northolt.

PARBURY. Yes, your Grace. (*exit* L. U. E.)

THYRA. (*moves down* C.) And, if I want anything, I always ring three times—you'll know that's for you— by the by—what's your name again?

ELIZA. (*again after slight pause*) Brown, my lady.

(SHE *follows* PARBURY *out.*)

THYRA. Rather a find? (*crosses over* L. *to table, and sits on edge*)

(GAWTHORPE *and* DURSINGHAM *come in together,* R. U. E.)

THE DUCHESS. Hulloa!

DURSINGHAM. Hulloa! (*moves to sofa and sits on end*)

THE DUCHESS. What have you done with Hoppy?

(GAWTHORPE *crosses to* THYRA L.)

DURSINGHAM. (*lighting a cigarette*) Left him to the Dook for a bit—I've had him on my shoulders all day—and I want to put my feet up.

THE DUCHESS. All day! my dear boy—he's been in my pocket for the last six months—I really think if any body has a right to grumble, I have.

THYRA. I do like you two—what about me?

DURSINGHAM. (C.) Well, what about you—surely, Thyra, *you're* not going to howl—I don't suppose you've ever said twenty words to the man.

THYRA. But I'm going to marry him to-morrow.

DURSINGHAM. Of course, you're going to marry him to-morrow—(*rises and crosses* C.)—that's nothin'. I've had to go about with him—and he's the meanest little sweep that ever was permitted to breathe—there have been times when I've reckoned up my expenses at the end of the day and found I was actually out of pocket by him.

THE DUCHESS. Very irritating.

DURSINGHAM. Irritatin'! It's humiliatin'—what? (*Goes up* C. *Slight pause*)

GAWTHORPE. (*behind table* L.) Duchess anything wrong with the Duke to-night? He seems very jumpy—between the soufflé and the coffee he looked at his watch fourteen times.

THE DUCHESS. Perhaps he didn't find us very amusing.

DURSINGHAM. (*moves* C.) No—it wasn't that. I can tell you what's the matter with him. Of course, the Dook is stuck here till Addleton comes—that's right, isn't it, dear?

THE DUCHESS. Quite right.

DURSINGHAM. (C.) Well, the Wentworth Daubeneys are givin' a big "at home" to-night.

GAWTHORPE. Oh!

THE DUCHESS. Ah!

DURSINGHAM. If the Duke is late in turnin' up—he is likely to hear of it from Mrs. Daubeney, and time's gettin' on, don't you know—

(*Smile from Everybody.*)

THE DUCHESS. Then, it really isn't fair that the dear old fellow should have Hoppy on top of his other worries—Otho, go back and relieve guard.

DURSINGHAM. Must I?

THE DUCHESS. Yes, go, there's a dear boy—to please me.

DURSINGHAM. Oh well, if you put it like that—(*going* L.) I say, old chap, oughtn't you to be movin'?

GAWTHORPE. Not yet—I've got my eyes on the time—(L. C.)

DURSINGHAM. Because if Addleton turned up and found you here there'd be new and expensive scenery.

GAWTHORPE. It's all right.

(DURSINGHAM *goes out*, R. U. E.)

GAWTHORPE. Thyra, will you come into the billiard room, and play fifty up?

THYRA. Yes, rather. (BOTH *above table* L.)

THE DUCHESS. I say you two—what am I to do with Hoppy?

THYRA. Oh, I don't know—anyhow I think I might be allowed to have my last evening to myself.

THE DUCHESS. There's something in that. (*crosses over* L. *and sits* L. *of table* L.)

(THE DUKE *has come in hastily,* R. U. E.)

THE DUKE. (*looking at his watch as he comes down*) Ah, there you are then—it's very late—quite preposterously late—(*sees* GAWTHORPE) my dear Gawthorpe—still here?

GAWTHORPE. Still here—

THE DUKE. Now, is that quite judicious? (C.) Addleton is Addleton—it's not easy to put the matter more strongly and so I really think —eh?

GAWTHORPE. I know, Duke—but you needn't worry—he can't possibly get here yet.

THE DUKE. Why not?

GAWTHORPE. I've looked up the trains—if he'd caught the five forty—he'd be here now—he must have missed that, so he simply can't arrive for (*looking at his watch*) another five and twenty minutes—

THE DUKE. Another five and twenty minutes! But confound him—he's putting me to the most serious inconvenience—I've got an appointment —a—business appointment, (*there is a general smile*) for which I'm late already.

GAWTHORPE. That's a nuisance—

(GAWTHORPE *and* THYRA *stroll off,* L. 1 E.)

THE DUKE. Nuisance! (*going towards* THE DUCHESS) what did the unspeakable old fool want to stop pottering at Dover for? (L. C.)

THE DUCHESS. His telegram gave the notion that he'd had an unusually rough passage.

(*Enter* FOOTMAN *with paper.*)

THE DUKE. Well yes, I daresay—but here I am tied hand and foot—and I particularly want to get away. (*takes paper and crosses to sofa* R.)

THE DUCHESS. We all want to get away.

THE DUKE. But when one happens to have a —a business appointment. (*sits on sofa*)

THE DUCHESS. I've got an appointment myself with Lady Loxdale—she's merely giving an "at home" so one can't call it *business*—but, as I've got to take Mr. Hopkinson with me—one can't call it *pleasure.*

THE DUKE. I don't, in the least, see my way.

THE DUCHESS. My dear fellow, I'm very sorry, but what can I do?

THE DUKE. (*rises and crosses to* DUCHESS, *with paper*) You wouldn't care to deal with Addleton single-handed?

THE DUCHESS. No, I shouldn't.

THE DUKE. Why?

THE DUCHESS. Do you think Mr. Hopkinson is the kind of future son-in-law Addleton is likely to appreciate just after a sea voyage?

THE DUKE. On the whole, perhaps not. Of course, one can't help realizing that our friend Hopkinson is—er—rather a large order—

THE DUCHESS. Yes, he is.

THE DUKE. I haven't had the advantage of cultivating his acquaintance to the extent you have—but does he always dwell with such steadfast consistency on the importance of economy—even in trifles?

THE DUCHESS. Always.

THE DUKE. And when he is in a lighter vein—does he usually fall back on acrostics?

THE DUCHESS. Usually.

THE DUKE. Well, I can't claim to be an authority on either topic. (*puts paper on chair* L.)

(DURSINGHAM *and* HOPKINSON *have come on together.*)

Ah! there you are, Mr. Hopkinson. (L. C.)

HOPKINSON. (C.) Yes, your Grace—we just waited to have one more half glass of wine—that's a very pleasant light claret you gave us—not heady. (*moves* R. *of* DUKE, C.)

THE DUKE. I am fortunate in your approval.

HOPKINSON. Now, if I may ask what does it stand you in? I notice Thyra drinks claret—and I wouldn't mind having a—a couple of dozen.

(DURSINGHAM *is lighting a cigarette. Comes to top of table* L.)

THE DUKE. I have no memory for commissariat details—but you can have the address of my wine merchant—(*goes up* C. *and writes telegram*)

HOPKINSON. Thenks—thenks.

THE DUCHESS. Have a cigarette, Mr. Hopkinson?

HOPKINSON. Not just at present, Duchess—(*crosses to* THE DUCHESS, L.) I'm getting on with my smoking. I can put on three a day now—but if I go outside my allowance, I find it gives me a mouth in the morning—and, when all's said and done, it's a habit that runs into money—(*to* THE DUKE)

THE DUKE. (*moves down* R. C.) I—er—fear I must leave you for a brief interval—I have business of a pressing nature I must attend to—

(DURSINGHAM *has come down.*)

DURSINGHAM. Anything I can see to for you, Dook?

THE DUKE. No, my dear Dursingham—this delay in Addleton's arrival—has completely dis-

located my plans for the evening—in fact I must send a telegram at once. (*crosses* R.)

(DURSINGHAM *smiles at the* DUCHESS.)

HOPKINSON. Shall I take it for you?

THE DUKE. You are very kind, Mr. Hopkinson, but—(*goes up behind sofa*)

HOPKINSON. Let me nip round to the Post Office with it—(*follows* HIM *up in front of sofa*)

THE DUKE. There is no necessity for me to trouble you—

HOPKINSON. No trouble, your Grace—

THE DUKE. I shall see you later—but perhaps—for the moment, you will excuse me—

HOPKINSON. Certainly, your Grace—don't make a stranger of me.

(THE DUKE *goes out* R. U. E.)

(HOPKINSON *goes up, looks through door up* R.)

DURSINGHAM. (*aside to the* DUCHESS) I half promised to sup at the Savoy with Brayleigh—and I want to send down to the Gaiety to let him know it's off—will you see to Hoppy? (*up* C.)

THE DUCHESS. Yes.

DURSINGHAM. Righto! I'll be back directly. (HE *goes off hastily,* L. U. E.)

(*Slight pause*—HOPKINSON *comes down.*)

THE DUCHESS. Well, Mr. Hopkinson—what have you been doing with yourself to-day? (*rises, and sits* R. *of table* L.)

HOPKINSON. Oh, nothing extra special, Duchess—I lunched with Dursingham, and some friends of his at Princes Restorong—they were very pleasant cheps—one in particular—I think Dursingham said he was in the Goldstream Guards—

THE DUCHESS. I'm not well up in Military matters, but I fancy it's Coldstream—

HOPKINSON. Very likely, you're right—he seemed to have quite a sense of humour—one or two little things I threw off in conversation—little things that were not—well, not hardly to say witty—but he nearly laughed himself into fits—he was so taken with an acrostic of mine, that he got me to repeat it five times.

THE DUCHESS. Really!

HOPKINSON. (*moves to back of table* L.) I think I'm beginning to get rid of some of my diffidence.

THE DUCHESS. Oh yes, you've made great progress in that direction—but we must avoid rushing into the other extreme—you see everybody isn't gifted with the same delicate sense of humour your friend in the Guards seems to possess—I was thinking of Lord Addleton—

HOPKINSON. My future Pa—

THE DUCHESS. Yes—you're to meet him tonight—the introduction would naturally have taken place before this—only, he was detained in Madrid—he's a man of very uncertain temper.

HOPKINSON. I daresay I shall soon get the length of his foot.

THE DUCHESS. I hope not—he's violent at times—but hardly to that extent.

HOPKINSON. No—I mean the right side of him. (*moves to front of table* L. *and sits*)

THE DUCHESS. Ah—quite so—as I once told you, he is very keen that anyone who marries Thyra should have no little episode in his past to explain away—and there was—a—trifling affair of that kind wasn't there—with a Miss?

HOPKINSON. Eliza Dibb.

THE DUCHESS. I suppose she wouldn't be likely to do anything that might cause a scandal—because if anything came to Lord Addleton's knowledge—even at the eleventh hour, he might—

HOPKINSON. There's no fear of that—about

three months ago, she sent me a nasty worded postcard—but since then, she seems to have dropped it.

THE DUCHESS. Well, that's something to the good—how about the lease of the house in Grosvenor Square?

HOPKINSON. I've secured the option—I suppose the agent's right—it is a most eligible family residence—but you wouldn't call it snug.

THE DUCHESS. Snug?

HOPKINSON. Of course, Duchess, when you say a thing is right—it's right—I'll take the house in Grosvenor Square—the rent is pretty awful—and the premium's a breather—same time, I think I see my way to getting a bit back over the fixtures—But I should like to ask whether you think it's necessary for the upkeep of my position for me to have a second establishment—

THE DUCHESS. A second establishment?

HOPKINSON. Yes—that's the question. Is a second establishment reely necessary?

THE DUCHESS. Well—it so much depends on one's moral point of view.

HOPKINSON. Eh—one's moral—oh goodness, Duchess—I didn't mean that—you quite—fail to apprehend me—Phew! (*wipes his forehead with his handkerchief*) No, I was only thinking that with so many exes of one sort and another—Thyra and I had better play light just at first—and you once said something about a villa belonging to somebody's niece.

THE DUCHESS. I said a villa at Nice—but there's no hurry about that.

HOPKINSON. Thenks—that takes a bit of flannel off my chest. (*picks up paper*)

(DURSINGHAM *has come back,* R. U. E.)

THE DUCHESS. Ah, Otho—got back—(*rises*)

DURSINGHAM. Yes.

THE DUCHESS. Now, I'll leave *you* to talk to Mr. Hopkinson. I want to speak to Thyra. (*going,* L.)

HOPKINSON. I should like half a word with Thyra, if quite convenient.

THE DUCHESS. (*above table,* L.) I'll try and send her to you—but I fancy, just at this moment, she's rather busy.

HOPKINSON. Much obliged.

(THE DUCHESS *goes out,* L. 1 E.)

DURSINGHAM. (*on sofa* R.) Well, Hoppy—my son—things have shaped pretty well for you, don't you think—(HE *sits*)—got any gratitude about you?

HOPKINSON. (*rises, and crosses to* DURSINGHAM, *with paper*) My dear Dursingham—you gave me my first hoist up, and when Thyra and I have settled down in our eligible family residence— there will always—at least—pretty often —be a knife and fork laid for you. (C.)

DURSINGHAM. Wonderful good of you—quite overwhelmin'.

HOPKINSON. Oh no—when a friend has stood by me—I like to do the handsome thing (*glancing at paper*) well, thank goodness, the Aerated Breads are up a bit. Gawthorpe's been very affable—and I'm told he don't cultivate everybody. (*moves to* DURSINGHAM'S R.)

DURSINGHAM. No—he's a bit exclusive.

HOPKINSON. Truth is, I fancy he's rather taken to me—

DURSINGHAM. (*slight pause*) That must be it—what a chap you are for spottin' things. Now, between ourselves, I shouldn't wonder if you saw quite a lot of Gawthorpe *after* you're married.

HOPKINSON. Think so? Very gratifying. (*crosses* L., *and sits* R. *of table* L.)

DURSINGHAM. Very.

(*The* DUKE *enters hastily,* R. U. E.)

THE DUKE. Hasn't he come yet?

DURSINGHAM. Not yet.

THE DUKE. Upon my life—I never was placed in such an inconvenient position—I've sent off one telegram, and the necessity for another will shortly be imperative. (C.)

HOPKINSON. I should try to take my mind off it.

DURSINGHAM. Look here, Dook, how about a little Bridge till he turns up—the Duchess and I against you and Hoppy—just a friendly ten shillin' flutter—what?

THE DUKE. In my present condition, I shouldn't remember a card—

(THYRA *comes in,* L. U. E.)

Ah, Thyra, where's the Duchess? (*goes up* C. *to* THYRA)

THYRA. I don't know—she came into the billiard room for a minute.

THE DUKE. She's not gone off to some party, by any chance, and left your infernal father—I beg pardon—and Mr. Hopkinson to me—

THYRA. I'm quite sure she hasn't. (*crosses up* C.)

DURSINGHAM. Oh Lord no—the Duchess always plays the game.

THE DUKE. The fact is my nerves are so hopelessly jarred, I hardly—

HOPKINSON. (*rises and crosses* C. *to* THE DUKE) A chemist once told me if your nerves are out of order it's a good thing to lie down quite flat—in a recumbent position, if you understand me—with your feet a good bit higher than your head—and—

THE DUKE. Thank you for the suggestion, Mr.

Hopkinson. (*crosses* R.) Dursingham, I want a word with you in the library if you can spare me a minute?

DURSINGHAM. (*rises*) Yes, Dook, as many as you like.

(THE DUKE *and* DURSINGHAM *go out,* R. 1 E.)

(*Slight pause*—THYRA *has sat down on sofa* R. *with some little hesitation*—HOPKINSON *puts paper on table* L. *and approaches* HER *and sits by* HER.

HOPKINSON. Well—Lady—er—that is to say, Thyra—

THYRA. Well?

HOPKINSON. We're—we're up against it.

THYRA. Yes.

HOPKINSON. Seems funny, don't it?

THYRA. What seems funny?

HOPKINSON. To-morrow—you and me—you know—the merridge—

THYRA. Do you call that funny?

HOPKINSON. P'r'aps not exactly funny—Rum!

THYRA. Most of my friends are amused. I can't quite see where the joke comes in.

HOPKINSON. People will jolly you a bit at these times—but I don't take no notice—(*pause*) I—I hope you'll be satisfied with the settlements. We don't sign till to-morrow morning, in consequence of waiting for your respected father—of course, I'm looking forward to the honour of making his acquaintance.

THYRA. I hope you'll find it pay you.

HOPKINSON. I hear he's a corker—but I dessay I shall get upsides with him—I've secured the option of the eligible family residence in Grosvenor Square.

THYRA. Oh—

HOPKINSON. The Duchess thinks well of it—

by the by there are stables, but they could be let out.

THYRA. Aren't they big enough?

HOPKINSON. You don't grasp my meaning—they could be *let*—

THYRA. What for?

HOPKINSON. I couldn't say off hand—a fairish bit.

THYRA. But why let them?

HOPKINSON. As we're to have a motor—the Duchess says motors—but I hope that's only her fun—I thought we shouldn't keep horses.

THYRA. Indeed we should—I should want my riding horse—and—

HOPKINSON. Anyway—I was thinking we might job—

THYRA. Job!

HOPKINSON. Chief thing I've got on my mind is fodder—that's where they do you—a man who was once a friend of mine—he ain't now—he's a clerk to a livery stable keeper and couldn't expect it—but he told me that fodder—

THYRA. I'm not at all interested in fodder.

HOPKINSON. I just named it, because we're very shortly to share everything in common—and therefore your expenses will be my expenses—

THYRA. Will you be good enough to ring the bell?

HOPKINSON. (*rising*) What? Oh certainly—(*crosses* L. *above table*)—you see if we begin as we mean to go on—(*going*)

THYRA. Ring three times please—I want my maid.

HOPKINSON. Three times—yes—with pleasure—(*rings*)—but—(*returning back to sofa*)—there was a remark of my late father's which he repeated—if I may say so—ad nosiam—he said—(*sits again, on sofa*)—

THYRA. You know you're going to Lady Lox-

dale's to-night?

HOPKINSON. The Duchess mentioned that I was to—er—

THYRA. Yes—she'll take you—I shall probably come on later—I must look in at the Stanways first—they're old friends.

(*During this* ELIZA *has come on,* L. U. E., *and stands quietly waiting for orders.*)

HOPKINSON. I see—well to go back to my late respected father—almost with his parting breath, he said to me—

ELIZA. Did your ladyship ring? (*moves* C.)

(THYRA *turns.*)

(HOPKINSON *also looks at* ELIZA *and then sits transfixed with horror.*)

THYRA. Yes—I did—will you have my cloak ready for me. I'm going out.

ELIZA. Yes, my lady.

THYRA. Rawlin has shown you where everything is?

ELIZA. Yes, my lady.

THYRA. All right—that'll do.

ELIZA. Thank you, my lady.

(SHE *goes out deliberately,* L. U. E.)

(HOPKINSON *turns and watches her departure—he then slowly regains his former position and sits in a dream.*)

THYRA. I think you were recalling your father's last words weren't you—what did he say?

HOPKINSON. Well I'm damned!

THYRA. Oh did he?

HOPKINSON. No—no—I—er— who was that? (*rises*)

THYRA. What?

HOPKINSON. The young person—just now—how did she get here?

THYRA. That was my new maid—I only engaged her this evening.

HOPKINSON. You engaged her—what for?

THYRA. What for? How do you mean? My last maid was ill—naturally, I shall want a maid to travel with us to-morrow.

HOPKINSON. To travel with us? Do you mean to say she's to go with us on our honeymoon?

THYRA. Of course, she is—why shouldn't she?

HOPKINSON. Why shouldn't she? Why, because—I won't stand it—she *can't* go with us—(*up* C. *and back*)

THYRA. Why not?

HOPKINSON. Look here, Lady—I—should say Thyra—that girl is not—not—necessary.

THYRA. Not necessary?

HOPKINSON. (R) There's—the—the—expense—even a—third class ticket—makes a difference.

THYRA. I think you must be taking leave of your senses.

HOPKINSON. And we don't want her—we don't want anybody—if—you're hard put to it at any time—I can lend you a hand myself—(*up* C.)—besides we can't have a third person dodging about after us at a time like that—(*moves* R. *to* THYRA)—it—it—it ain't delicate.

THYRA. You're talking preposterous rot.

HOPKINSON. Dessay I am—I think there may be a—a—change in the weather—if you'll excuse me—I'll just go and see—what the time is (*aside*) I must find her, or she'll upset the apple cart.

(HOPKINSON *goes out hastily,* L. U. E.—*at the same moment,* GAWTHORPE, L. 1 E., *comes out hastily.*)

(THYRA *is sitting moodily.*)

GAWTHORPE. Hulloa, old girl, anything the matter?

THYRA. Yes. (*rises*)

GAWTHORPE. Hoppy?

THYRA. (*rising hastily*) I won't do it. (*crosses over* L.)

GAWTHORPE. Won't do what?

THYRA. I won't marry that mean vulgar crawling little bounder.

GAWTHORPE. Then, what do you mean to do?

THYRA. (C.) I shall chuck it somehow—I shall get away.

GAWTHORPE. Where?

THYRA. Anywhere. (C.)

GAWTHORPE. Alone?

THYRA. Yes.

GAWTHORPE. Steady—let's think this out carefully—(*sits on upper end of sofa* R.—*pause*—)—we fancied Hoppy might be made to suit you.

THYRA. I know we did—but the whole thing is too beastly—I can't stick it.

GAWTHORPE. I've had doubts about it myself.

THYRA. Well then, if *you*—

GAWTHORPE. Shut up a minute—I'm trying to see my way—(*slight pause*) Look here, you're not going rushing off to nowhere in particular.

THYRA. Who says so?

GAWTHORPE. I say so—

THYRA. I don't see why you should care.

GAWTHORPE. No more do I—but the odd thing about it is—that I do.

THYRA. You do? (*eagerly. Business*)

GAWTHORPE. (*pushing her hands away*) Steady—well now, if you'll keep yourself in hand to-night, and won't try to blow the house out of window—over Hoppy and his little ways—I'll try whether I can't—

THYRA. Yes? (*same business*)

GAWTHORPE. (*rises*) Steady now—I'll try whether I can't marry you myself to-morrow morning.

THYRA. What! You're rotting—you don't really mean it? (*moves* L.)

GAWTHORPE. I've never bolted with any woman yet who wasn't married—and I certainly never thought of marrying anybody myself—but as you and I are old pals—and you're in a bit of a hole which I helped to dig—if you like to risk it—we'll call it a go.

THYRA. Oh, my dear old fellow—indeed—indeed, we'll call it a go.

GAWTHORPE. Very well then—I'll see what can be done—if our luck is in—things seem to point to a special license about eleven thirty to-morrow—but we must talk it over—you've got a card for the Stanways' dance, haven't you?

THYRA. Yes.

GAWTHORPE. I didn't mean to turn up—dances are poison to me—but we could meet and settle final preliminaries—(C.)—can you go on there now?

THYRA. Yes.

GAWTHORPE. Without waiting to see Papa?

THYRA. I'll square it with Auntie.

GAWTHORPE. Then, get away as quick as you can.

THYRA. (*crosses* R.) Righto—(SHE comes *back, and puts her hands on his shoulders*)

GAWTHORPE. Steady, old girl.

THYRA. Mustn't I even thank you?

GAWTHORPE. There isn't time to do it properly, and there's a very decent conservatory at the Stanleys with palms in it.

(BOTH *down* L.)

THYRA. Anyhow—you've got to hear me say

just this much—I think you're a dear old thing —and when we're married I mean to try all I know to make you forget I'm only your own wife—Do you think I could rise to that?

GAWTHORPE. Well, it don't do to be too sanguine, but, upon my soul, I shouldn't wonder if you did—Hold on—here's Otho.

(DURSINGHAM *comes in quickly,* R. 1 E.)

(THYRA *goes up* C.)

DURSINGHAM. I say, Thyra—(*sees.* GAWTHORPE—)—oh, is that you, old man? What have you done with Hoppy? (*up to table* R.)

THYRA. (*above sofa* R.) He found out I'd engaged a maid to go with us to-morrow—and he was taken so faint at the notion of the extra expense that he had to go and get a breath of air—

(*Both men laugh.*)

I'll go and put my cloak on—(*to* GAWTHORPE) We shall meet at the Stanways?

GAWTHORPE. Yes, old girl.

DURSINGHAM. Oh that's it—is it?

THYRA. (*going*) Otho, you know too much—ring the bell three times, will you, and tell the girl I want her—

(THYRA *goes out* R. U. E.—*slight pause.*)

DURSINGHAM. (*moves* C.) Fancy Thyra will train on when she's married—what?

GAWTHORPE. So I think.

DURSINGHAM. Yes—in the hands of a good trainer like yourself, she'd soon come up in the bettin'.

GAWTHORPE. I say, old man, I want a thousand.

DURSINGHAM. Daresay you do.

GAWTHORPE. I suppose you haven't got it? (L.)

DURSINGHAM. Haven't got it! I wish I'd as many hundreds as I haven't got it.

GAWTHORPE. I must have it to-night to do any good—think you could get it for me?

DURSINGHAM. Who from? (*crosses* C.) The Dook's stony just now—and you don't expect me to try it on with Addleton, do you?

GAWTHORPE. Oh well, the night's young—I must look up somebody else. (*going up* L. C.)

DURSINGHAM. Wait a bit—how about Hoppy?

GAWTHORPE. Is he any good?

DURSINGHAM. He wouldn't lend me tenpence—but he has a great idea of you—the only thing is where do I come in?

GAWTHORPE. I don't know.

DURSINGHAM. How long do you want it for?

GAWTHORPE. Only a week or two—I shall be pretty right by the end of next month.

(BOTH *move down* C.)

DURSINGHAM. Then, I see my way—Hoppy lends it to you—you pay me back—as soon as ever you can, old chap—and I settle up with Hoppy when it's quite convenient.

GAWTHORPE. Sounds workable.

DURSINGHAM. It's great—then we leave it at that?

GAWTHORPE. We leave it at that.

DURSINGHAM. Wonder where Hoppy is—you get into hiding in case of Addleton—and I'll hunt him up.

(GAWTHORPE *goes out quickly,* L. 1 E.)

(DURSINGHAM *goes up—and meets* HOPKINSON, *who comes in at the same moment, and down* R.)

DURSINGHAM. Oh, there you are.

HOPKINSON. (*to himself*) Can't find her any-

where—wonder if it was only a dream—I remember having a dreadful dream once—but that was after eating whelks.

DURSINGHAM. What the devil are you talking about?

HOPKINSON. Did you ever eat whelks for supper?

DURSINGHAM. No, I never did—and I'm damned if I'm goin' to begin now—Hoppy, I can put you into a big thing—you can gain a lifelong friend.

HOPKINSON. I could do with a lifelong friend just now. (*behind sofa* R.)

DURSINGHAM. You were speakin' of Gawthorpe a little while ago.

HOPKINSON. Interrupting you for a moment—

(BOTH *move below sofa* R.)

Thyra wants to take a maid with her on the honeymoon—(*up* R., *above sofa*)

DURSINGHAM. What of it? (C.)

HOPKINSON. (*crosses over,* L.) I—I—won't have it—take that girl with us—why it won't bear talking about.

DURSINGHAM. Then, don't talk about it—I was going to say—that Gawthorpe—

HOPKINSON. And she'd go—I haven't a doubt but what she'd go—(L. *of* DURSINGHAM)

DURSINGHAM. If Thyra engaged her, of course she'd go.

HOPKINSON. But only think of it—think of the—the—er—(*on steps* L.)

DURSINGHAM. The what?

HOPKINSON. The—extra expense.

DURSINGHAM. Oh Lord!

HOPKINSON. And the loss of one's privacy—(*looking through door* L. 1 E.)

DURSINGHAM. We can't discuss such utter

piffle as that—look here—you want to make a friend of Gawthorpe—what?

HOPKINSON. (*in a dream*) Eh—yes—I dessay —I mean—I do—

DURSINGHAM. I happen to know that by an extraordinary lucky chance he wants a thousand quid.

HOPKINSON. But what do you require me to do—write and congratulate him?

DURSINGHAM. No—no—Gawthorpe wouldn't borrow it of you, because he hasn't known you long enough—but I think I can get him to take it from *me*—so I'll borrow it of you and let him know you're obligin' him in a roundabout way.

HOPKINSON. But even like that, we might wound his pride—I shouldn't care to risk it. (*crosses over* R. *and up behind sofa*)

DURSINGHAM. If he *won't* take it, I'll give it you back, but I think he *will*—got your cheque book?

HOPKINSON. Yes—I have—but—(*above sofa*)

DURSINGHAM. Come and write the cheque.

(DURSINGHAM *takes him over to writing table—* HOPKINSON *goes very unwillingly.*)

HOPKINSON. Yes—but—you know—it's a bit of money. (*crosses to table* C.)

DURSINGHAM. It's nothing at all, my dear chap—Gawthorpe's safe to pay you back—I mean to pay *me* back.

(HOPKINSON *sits and take out his cheque book.*)

HOPKINSON. Oh well, if it must be. Have you got a J. nib? (HE *writes*)

DURSINGHAM. By George, I've just remembered Thyra told me to ring three times for the girl there's all this fuss about.

HOPKINSON. What say?

DURSINGHAM. (*going to bell*) Nothin' old man—you go on writing—(*rings three times. Comes back to* HOPKINSON) Make it payable to bearer—what are you doin'—for the love of goodness, don't cross it—

HOPKINSON. Excuse me repeating myself, Dursingham, but this is—a bit of money—

DURSINGHAM. (L. *of* HOPKINSON) You're obligin' Gawthorpe—keep your eye on that—and he won't forget it.

HOPKINSON. But—I'm lending it to you, ain't I—I mean you're responsible to *me*.

DURSINGHAM. Of course, I am—

HOPKINSON. Wel, then, I hope *you* won't forget it—

DURSINGHAM. My dear fella—as if I should be likely to—

(ELIZA *has come on*, L. U. E., *during this, unnoticed by both men.*)

ELIZA. Did you ring, sir? (*on steps* L.)

DURSINGHAM. What—yes—Lady Thyra wants you.

ELIZA. Very well, sir. (*going,* R.)

(HOPKINSON *has again remained transfixed—but rouses himself*)

HOPKINSON. Here—Hi—wait a minute. (*rises and moves* R.)

ELIZA. Did you wish to speak to me, sir? (*above sofa* R.)

HOPKINSON. Yes—at least—that is—no—I—may have—something to say—orders to give—as it were—but—not just at present.

ELIZA. Thank you, sir. (SHE *goes quietly out,* R. U. E.)

HOPKINSON. It's her—there's no sort of doubt about it—it's her. (*looking through door* R. U. E.)

DURSINGHAM. Who? (*up* C.)

HOPKINSON. Her—I tell you it's her!

DURSINGHAM. What do you mean by 'Her'?

HOPKINSON. Why it's—it's (*remembering himself*)—it's the new maid. (C.)

DURSINGHAM. Are you often this way, old chap?

HOPKINSON. No—(R. *of* DURSINGHAM)—but—I've got an all overish sensation—it makes me feel kind of giddy—I think I'll go out and lean my head against a lamppost—if—you'll excuse me—(*going*)

DURSINGHAM. Here, hold on—you haven't given me the cheque—

HOPKINSON. Oh—haven't I—(*tears it out hastily and gives it*)

DURSINGHAM. Thanks. (*takes it*)

HOPKINSON. (*aside*) Must see her alone—must find out what her game is.

DURSINGHAM. What?

HOPKINSON. Nothing—excuse me—back in half a mo—(*goes out hastily* R. U. E., *dangling cheque book*)

DURSINGHAM. Pulled it off—(*going up* C., *and then calling*) Gawthorpe.

(GAWTHORPE *comes in,* L. 1 E.)

GAWTHORPE. Yes—

DURSINGHAM. (*giving him the cheque*) There—how's that? (*drops* L. *above table*)

GAWTHORPE. Good—

DURSINGHAM. Good! I should say it was—but the crafty little Devil pretended to be taken seedy just at the finish in order to get away without partin'.

GAWTHORPE. Much obliged to you for your trouble. (*crosses* R. *in front of* DURSINGHAM)

(THE DUCHESS *comes in,* L. 1 E.)

THE DUCHESS. What's happened to everybody—hasn't Addleton come?

GAWTHORPE. No—(R. C.)

THE DUCHESS. My dear Gawthorpe—so fearfully sorry to turn you out—but you quite understand, don't you? (*sits* L. *of table* L.)

GAWTHORPE. Quite.

(THE DUKE *enters quickly,* R. 1 E.)

(DURSINGHAM *above* THE DUCHESS' *chair.*)

THE DUKE. Is the man coming at all—**or** is he trying some infernal trick on us—I've just sent a second telegram—the thing would be ludicrous—(C.)—if it wasn't tragic—Good Heavens, Gawthorpe, you surely haven't lingered till this time—it's playing with fire.

GAWTHORPE. Just off, Duke—Good-bye. (*crosses to* THE DUCHESS)

THE DUKE. Good-bye, my dear fellow—good-bye.

THE DUCHESS. You feel how we're situated about to-morrow—we should have been so delighted to see you at the wedding—shouldn't we? (*to* THE DUKE)

(DURSINGHAM *shakes hands with* THE DUCHESS.)

THE DUKE. Charmed! but don't keep him. (*goes up with him*)

GAWTHORPE. I know you're—both more than kind—but—I expect to be rather busy myself to-morrow—Good-night. (*on steps* L.)

THE DUKE. }
THE DUCHESS. } Good night.

(GAWTHORPE *goes,* L. U. E.)

THE DUKE. (*up* C.) He will probably collide with Addleton in the front hall—but we are in the hands of fate—

(THYRA *comes in,* R. U. E., *quickly with cloak on.*)

Ch, Thyra—there you are—you're not going out?

THYRA. (R. C.) Yes, I am—I'm going to the Stanways—I promised them.

THE DUKE. (C.) With your father arriving directly—you shouldn't be away—there should be a fair division of his temper among us all. (*up* C.)

DURSINGHAM. (*to* THE DUCHESS) Let her go, dear—it's her last little look in. (*above table* L.)

THYRA. May I, Auntie? (*crosses to* THE DUCHESS, L.)

THE DUCHESS. All right—run along—I suppose I must take Hoppy to Lady Loxdale's on my own.

THYRA. You're a dear thing—and so's Otho—I love the two of you. Good-night, Uncle—say something pretty for me to dear Papa.

(SHE *goes out quickly,* L. U. E.)

DURSINGHAM. Thyra's attitude is flippant and evasive. (*moves* R.)

THE DUCHESS. I believe she has a kind of appointment with Mrs. Stanway.

THE DUKE. Other people may have appointments—business appointments—but they don't shirk their duty.

THE DUCHESS. Otho, where's that wretched Hoppy? We shall want him directly.

THE DUKE. Ah yes, what's happened to him?

DURSINGHAM. I don't know—he's suddenly taken to boltin' about the passages.

THE DUKE. Really—that's a singular development.

THE DUCHESS. Very.

DURSINGHAM. He promised to be back in a minute.

(PARBURY *comes in,* L. U. E.)

PARBURY. Lord Addleton, your Grace. (*general movement*)

THE DUKE. Thank heaven—at last—(*to* PARBURY) Well, why the Devil don't you see to him? Where is he? (*moves to* PARBURY *up* C.)

PARBURY. His man-servant is assisting his lordship up-stairs, your Grace.

THE DUKE. Oh—all right—I suppose that will occupy another twenty minutes—(C)

(ADDLETON *supported by* BLISSET *appears at* L. *upper entrance.*)

My dear Addleton, there you are then—we're simply overjoyed to see you—

(ADDLETON *is assisted down by* BLISSET *and* PARBURY. *He is wrapped up in a large fur coat and travelling cap with flaps to it—of which* BLISSET *relieves him—*HE *then sits on lounge.* BLISSET *and* PARBURY *go off,* L. U. E. *The dialogue continues through this.*)

ADDLETON. Yes, I have arrived at last, Braceborough—(C)

THE DUCHESS. We were getting rather anxious. (L)

THE DUKE. Particularly anxious. (R. *of* ADDLETON)

DURSINGHAM. Quite jumpy. (*moves to front of table* L. *and sits*)

ADDLETON. Who is that? Oh—Mr. Dursingham, I believe. (C.)

DURSINGHAM. Quite right.

ADDLETON. (*crosses to sofa and sits up end*) It was a deplorable passage—I was prostrate at Dover—I was carried on shore by a mixed detachment of maritime and railway officials—there was a very narrow gangway and crossing it was a nervous moment for all concerned.

THE DUKE. (R. C. *again*) It must have been thrilling—but (*looking at his watch*) since you are here—

ADDLETON. I rested for some hours—and then suddenly found myself able to absorb an unexpected quantity of nourishment.

THE DUKE. Come—come—that's hearty—

ADDLETON. Ah! but my efforts were wasted—later on the swaying movement of the train affected me very unfavorably—and I found from symptoms which I will not describe—that my meal at Dover had been injudicious and premature.

THE DUKE. A long night's rest (*looking at his watch*) which it would be imprudent to delay—will work wonders. (R. C.)

ADDLETON. Where is Thyra?

THE DUKE. Thyra?

ADDLETON. Why, isn't she here? Surely, she's at home on the evening of my return?

THE DUKE. Well no—she isn't exactly—at home—she's—in point of fact out—but—

ADDLETON. Out!

THE DUCHESS. My fault—I let her go—she's with our old friends the Stanways.

ADDLETON. I have no acquaintance with any Stanways. You should not have encouraged Thyra in her neglect of filial duty.

THE DUCHESS. That's mere nonsense—the Stanways are quite nice people and the fact that you don't know them is your bad luck.

ADDLETON. I presume my future son-in-law—Mr—?

THE DUKE. Mr. Hopkinson.

ADDLETON. Mr. Hopkinson is with her?

THE DUKE. No—not absolutely with her—he's—he's here. (*watch. Business*)

ADDLETON. I don't perceive him—if he's here—where is he?

DURSINGHAM. Oh—he's somewhere about. (*seated* L. *of table* L.)

ADDLETON. Somewhere about, sir?

DURSINGHAM. He'll be here in a minute.

ADDLETON. I am still in considerable doubt as to his type of personality. The letters you sent me respecting him were strangely lacking in descriptive detail.

THE DUKE. We said what we could, but Mr. Hopkinson is really—quite indescribable—Isn't he?

THE DUCHESS. Quite—you must see him to fully appreciate him.

ADDLETON. Where is the difficulty? Is he possessed of unusual subtlety of mind?

THE DUCHESS. Hardly that—you know Addleton you mustn't expect too much—you applied to me and I've done what I could—but there's so little marriageable material in the market just now—that really it's as difficult to find a match for a girl as it is for a ribbon—I point this out to you because if when you've seen Mr. Hopkinson you think the quality of the pattern is a little inferior—I should be sorry—but he was the best thing I had in stock.

ADDLETON. Bring him to me—I have a feeling of lethargy—the channel passage took a good deal out of me.

THE DUKE. So I should imagine—I'll see to it at once. (*crosses to table* L.)

(ADDLETON *leans back with closed eyes*—THE DUKE *crosses over to* THE DUCHESS *and* DURSINGHAM *who are sitting at table* L.—*speaking to them aside.*)

(*behind table* L.) Now, where is Mr. Hopkinson? I don't want to blame either of you—but you shouldn't have let him out of your sight.

THE DUCHESS. That's all very well—but he's a fearful strain.

THE DUKE. Here is Addleton almost coma-

tose—not at all in a condition to realize the kind of person Hopkinson actually is—it's providential, and yet we can't bring them together.

(HOPKINSON *comes on at back,* R. U. E.)

DURSINGHAM. I'll dig him out. (*rises and looks through door* L. 1 E.)

THE DUKE. Do, my dear Dursingham.

(THEY *all turn and catch sight of* HOPKINSON.)

DURSINGHAM. Hulloa!

THE DUKE. (C.) Ah now! this is genuinely fortunate—we were hoping for your return.

HOPKINSON. (*aside,* R. C.) I can't find her anywhere.

THE DUKE. (*speaking in a subdued voice, and taking* HOPKINSON *by the arm.* BOTH *move* C.) Lord Addleton has arrived.

HOPKINSON. Oh has he—where is he?

THE DUKE. Over there—he's fortunately dozing for the moment—(C.)

HOPKINSON. Could I just have a squint?

(THE DUKE *goes up* C.)

(HOPKINSON *advances cautiously and surveys* ADDLETON, *who is asleep with his mouth open—* HOPKINSON *retreats again hastily,* L.)

I don't like the look of him at all—couldn't I postpone him till to-morrow? (*between* THE DUKE *and* THE DUCHESS)

THE DUKE. Impossible.

THE DUCHESS. That's absurd.

HOPKINSON. But what shall I say to him? (*to* THE DUCHESS)

THE DUCHESS. Don't be dismal with him.

DURSINGHAM. (*above table* L.) No—be brisk and chirpy—be your own bright self.

THE DUKE. Very sound advice—now, if you're

ready, I'll rouse Addleton—and then some of us may be able to get away. (*taps end of sofa*)

HOPKINSON. Hold on, your Grace—just half a mo—Duchess—I must ask you—you see Thyra and I—being on our honeymoon—will want to keep ourselves to ourselves—

THE DUCHESS. Yes—well—

HOPKINSON. And then there's the extra expense and one thing and another, so do you think we need take a maid with us?

THE DUCHESS. My dear Mr. Hopkinson—Really!

DURSINGHAM. Upon my soul—

(THE DUKE *who has been hovering round* ADDLETON *now hastily returns.*)

THE DUKE. Eh—what's the matter?

THE DUCHESS. Something about Mr. Hopkinson's unwillingness—to engage a maid for Thyra—

HOPKINSON. You see your Grace—

THE DUKE. Good Heavens, my dear sir—there is no time for trivialities of that kind—Pray be serious—now then—nerve yourself. Addleton—! (*shakes* HIM)

ADDLETON. (*opening his eyes*) Eh!

THE DUKE. Sorry to disturb you—but you mustn't forestall your night's rest—and this is your—er—that is to say—this is Mr. Hopkinson.

ADDLETON. (*sitting up*) Where?

THE DUKE. Here. (*indicating* HOPKINSON—C. —*who bows profoundly*)

ADDLETON. What that?

THE DUKE. Undoubtedly. (R. *of* HOPKINSON)

(ADDLETON *groans and sinks back again*)

HOPKINSON. Happy to know you, my lord—glad to pay my duty to my future Father—

(ADDLETON *groans again louder than before*)

What's the matter with the old gent? (*to* THE DUCHESS)

THE DUCHESS. (*aside*) He's had a rough passage—

ADDLETON. (*aside to* THE DUKE) Braceborough—what do you mean by this? How dared you do it, sir?

THE DUKE. (*behind sofa* R.) My dear Addleton, exercise a little ordinary control—

ADDLETON. How dared you?

THE DUKE. Don't judge hastily—(*top of sofa*) —you'll find he'll grow on you—

(ADDLETON *groans again.*)

HOPKINSON. He seems to be taken very bad.

THE DUKE. (*still aside to* ADDLETON) Remember the thing has gone much too far to be stopped now—have a little chat together and then sleep on him—figuratively of course—(*aloud. Moves* C.) My dear Hopkinson, we will leave you and your distinguished future relative to talk things over. The presence of any third person would only be an embarrassment to both —and, speaking for myself, I have business to attend to, which is (*looking at his watch*) atrociously overdue.

ADDLETON. You're not going, Braceborough—you won't leave me?

THE DUKE. I absolutely must—we shall meet in the morning—Smethurst will be here at eleven thirty—mortgage—settlements—and so on—see you then—good-night—

(ADDLETON *groans.* THE DUKE *moves away*)

Good-night, Mr. Hopkinson. (*crosses* L. *in front of* HOPKINSON)

HOPKINSON. (*follows him up*) Good-night, your Grace.

THE DUKE. The Duchess will see to you—Good-night everybody. (*rushes out* L. U. E.)

HOPKINSON. Well, Duchess—I—er—

DURSINGHAM. (*to* THE DUCHESS—*rises*) Find I've just got time after all for a bit of supper with Brayleigh—so I'll make tracks.

THE DUCHESS. But you'll come on to Lady Loxdale's? (*rises*)

DURSINGHAM. Of course, I will.

THE DUCHESS. All right.

HOPKINSON. Duchess—I—er—

THE DUCHESS. (*crossing to* ADDLETON) One moment—(*crosses over* R.) Well Addleton—I hope your head will be better to-morrow.

(DURSINGHAM *fills his cigarette case from table* L.)

ADDLETON. It is not my head.

THE DUCHESS. Well then, the remainder of you—we won't particularise—Good-night.

ADDLETON. Are you leaving me?

THE DUCHESS. I have to look in at Lady Loxdale's—rather a nuisance—but I promised—so there's no help for it—

(ADDLETON *groans—to* HOPKINSON *aside.*)

I'll put my cloak on and then we can go. (*crosses to door* R. U. E.)

HOPKINSON. But—

THE DUCHESS. Talk to him till then—and do try to be cheerful.

HOPKINSON. But, Duchess—

THE DUCHESS. I won't be very long—(*she goes out,* R. U. E.)

DURSINGHAM. I'm off, old man.

HOPKINSON. Here, I say, Dursingham—(*crosses to* DURSINGHAM'S, L.)

DURSINGHAM. Good-night, Lord Addleton.

ADDLETON. What are you going *too?*

DURSINGHAM. Bit of supper at the Savoy—(ADDLETON *groans*) Late already. (*going*)

HOPKINSON. I say, look here, Dursingham—(*following him*)

DURSINGHAM. I shall do it in a quick hamson—good-night, Hoppy—see you to-morrow. (*he rushes off,* L. U. E.)

HOPKINSON. (*aside—on steps* L.) There he is—I do *not* like the look of him—Dursingham said I was to be my own bright self—suppose I must have a dash—

(ADDLETON *turns and looks at him*—HOPKINSON *gives a hollow laugh*—ADDLETON *glares.*)

ADDLETON. Come here, sir.

HOPKINSON. Beg pardon? (*moves* C.)

ADDLETON. Since there is an apparent necessity for us to become better acquainted, bring a chair, and sit down.

HOPKINSON. What say?

ADDLETON. Bring a chair.

HOPKINSON. Thanks—(*he brings a chair from up* R.)—Just come off the briny haven't you, my lord—and it churned you up a bit? I remember a similar thing happening to me one Bank holiday at Brighton—foolish like I went out in the Skylark—I felt pretty right at first—but as soon as ever she began to go uppy and downy (*imitates up and down movement with his hands*) you know?

ADDLETON. With your permission, I should prefer some other topic of conversation less graphically illustrated—my recovery is not by any means firmly established.

HOPKINSON. I see—you want to give your inside a chance to simmer down—talking of

Brighton—I was down there for a week end a little while ago with Gawthorpe—and he—

ADDLETON. Did you say Gawthorpe?

HOPKINSON. Yes—Lord Gawthorpe—

ADDLETON. I am astonished that anyone who bears your reputed character for steadiness—should seek the companionship of such a person.

HOPKINSON. Now, you name it—I did hear you and he never speak as you pass by—but he's a very pleasant gentlemanlike sort of man.

ADDLETON. I desire to hear nothing concerning him, sir—(*again closes his eyes*)

HOPKINSON. (*aside*) Don't seem to have found a short cut to him yet—

(ADDLETON *opens his eyes and glares*—HOPKINSON *repeats his hollow laugh.*)

Take any interest in acrostics?

ADDLETON. In what, sir?

HOPKINSON. Acrostics—you're just back from Madrid—that was your last billet wasn't it?

ADDLETON. Yes, sir, my official duties have entailed a somewhat lengthy residence in Madrid.

HOPKINSON. That's what I say—well, it brings to my mind the circumstance that I once wrote an acrostic about Spain—

My first is neither loss not gain
My second blooms in sunny Spain see? sunny (Spain)
My third comes sailing o'er the sea
My fourth you sometimes take with tea
My fifth—

ADDLETON. What's the meaning of all this drivel, sir?

HOPKINSON. Drivel?

ADDLETON. Drivel.

HOPKINSON. Ah, you don't care for poetry—I've met persons afflicted like that before—let us pass to some other topic—

ADDLETON. How long have you been engaged to my daughter?

HOPKINSON. Thyra? Oh—we fixed it up about three months ago—but we met about three months previous—it was—as you might say—love at first sight—on both sides—think you'll be gratified over the settlements—when his Grace, the Duke first named 'em to me—I said cartey blanche—not but what one or two little items have been stuck in lately without my permish—and I shall want a word or two with Mr. Smethurst about 'em in the morning—

(ADDLETON *groans.*)

What say?

(ADDLETON *waives the question away.*)

Oh thought you spoke—then there's the residence in Grosvenor Square—Dursingham went over it with me—and he says there's plenty of scope—seemed to me there was nothing *but* scope—except delapidations—but I've got a pickled onion in the agent's bottle over *them*—you won't find me repapering the kitchen—or whitewashing the scullery—

ADDLETON. Mr. Hopkinson—I am conscious of a rising feeling of nausea—which your conversation does nothing to dispel.

HOPKINSON. Feeling a bit qualmy?

ADDLETON. Kindly ring the bell for my servant—

HOPKINSON. (*rising*) Certainly. (*crosses* L. *above table*)

ADDLETON. I shall retire to my apartment.

HOPKINSON. Don't know but what you're right —(*rings the bell*) If you could do a sleep—it might straighten you up—

ADDLETON. Ring the bell, sir.

HOPKINSON. I have rung it.

ADDLETON. Ring again—do as I direct you.

HOPKINSON. Very well—(*going again and ringing the bell irritably*) There—now I've rung three times—will that do?

ADDLETON. Any delay might be fatal—

HOPKINSON. (*moves* R. *again*) Of course, you know your own constitution—but if it was myself—I should drink a glass of mustard and water and make a thorough job of it—(*moves chair back*)

(ELIZA *comes in,* L. U. E.)

ADDLETON. How dare you, sir! (*groans*)

HOPKINSON. It did wonders for my late respected father after tinned salmon.

ADDLETON. Silence.

HOPKINSON. All right—(*turning away,* L., *and up* C., *and sees* ELIZA) Oh there you are at last! (*moves* C.)

ELIZA. Did you ring?

HOPKINSON. (*taking hold of her arm and speaking aside*) Yes, I did—you've done me twice before to-night, but you don't get away again. (*up* R. C.)

ELIZA. (*aside*) You let go of me.

HOPKINSON. No, I shan't—not till we understand where we are.

ELIZA. You're forgetting where *you* are.

ADDLETON. What are you doing, Mr. Hopkinson?

HOPKINSON. (*aside*) This is a very serious matter you know.

ELIZA. (*aside*) Yes—and so you'll find it.

HOPKINSON. (*aside*) There's been quite enough of acting the goat—

ELIZA. (*aside*) A bit too much I think.

ADDLETON. Mr. Hopkinson—do you hear me—who is that young person?

(HOPKINSON *turns and waves his hand to* ADDLETON *with a hollow laugh.*)

HOPKINSON. Attend to you directly—(*aside*) we've got to settle up with one another.

ELIZA. That we have—

(BOTH *above table* L.)

HOPKINSON. (*aside*) I won't be played the fool with—(*still holding her*)

ELIZA. You let me go. (*business*)

ADDLETON. What do you mean by this conduct, sir? I insist on your releasing the young woman at once—

(HOPKINSON *does so.*)

Now then—who are you? (*to* ELIZA)

ELIZA. (*moves* C.) I am Lady Thyra's maid —her ladyship engaged me this evening.

ADDLETON. My daughter's maid—Oh! then send my servant to me, will you?

ELIZA. Yes, my Lord—(*going up* C.)

(HOPKINSON *follows her.*)

HOPKINSON. But look here, you know—(*up* R. C.)

ADDLETON. Remain here, Mr. Hopkinson—I shall require an explanation.

HOPKINSON. (*looking back with hollow laugh*) Half a mo—(*aside*) Come back afterwards. I want to talk to you.

ELIZA. (*aside*) I'll come back—I want to talk to *you*—(SHE *goes*)

(HOPKINSON *returns.*)

ADDLETON. Now, what have you to say, sir—you are entirely falsifying the character for propriety my relatives gave you.

HOPKINSON. I don't apprehend your meaning.

ADDLETON. A moment ago you appeared to be dallying with my daughter's maid.

HOPKINSON. Oh no—come—I wasn't not to say dallying—I was giving her a few orders—but I feel sure she won't suit us.

ADDLETON. I am relieved to hear you say so.

HOPKINSON. Oh no—a day's notice—(*comes back to sofa*)—and a week's wages will be the programme.

(BLISSET *comes on,* L. U. E., *and crosses* R. *behind sofa.*)

ADDLETON. Very well, sir—your method of controlling your female domestics does not commend itself to me—Blisset—I am feeling most unwell.

BLISSET. Indeed, my lord?

ADDLETON. I think I will go to bed, Blisset.

BLISSET. Quite so, my Lord.

ADDLETON. You have tested the dryness of the sheets?

BLISSET. I have, my Lord.

ADDLETON. Then give me your assistance.

(BLISSET *helps* ADDLETON *to get up.*)

Which is the nearest way to my sleeping apartment?

BLISSET. In this direction, my Lord.

ADDLETON. Very well—we will go deliberately, Blisset—any sudden movement might unhinge me—Good-night, Mr. Hopkinson.

HOPKINSON. Good-night, my Lord—very pleased to meet you.

(ADDLETON *goes laboriously out,* R. 1 E.)

Now, I wonder where she's got to—

(ELIZA *comes on,* L. U. E.)

Are we to have any more hare and hounds about the passages—

ELIZA. Here I am, Mr. Hopkinson.

HOPKINSON. Oh—is that you, Eliza? And if I may throw out the remark—what do you think of yourself?

ELIZA. (*moves* C.) Wouldn't it save time if I was to tell you what I think of you?

HOPKINSON. No, it wouldn't—respecting your opinion of me—I've no vulgar curiosity—you wriggled your way in here—

ELIZA. I didn't wriggle—

HOPKINSON. For the purpose of argument—I say you wriggled your way into this residence—where I am well known and highly respected—where I am—anyhow you got in with a false character.

ELIZA. I didn't—what do you mean by low talk of that kind—there's nothing wrong with my character.

HOPKINSON. You took a false name.

ELIZA. I took my dear mother's name which is Brown.

HOPKINSON. But you didn't take your dear father's name which is Dibb—mind if I was to give you away—and my friends the Duke and Duchess of Braceborough were to make a legal job of it—the best that could happen to you would be—detained for enquiries.

ELIZA. I've been engaged by Lady Thyra Hopkinson that is to be—as her travelling maid—on the honeymoon.

HOPKINSON. (*gives a hollow laugh*) Ha—ha—excuse me but I can't help but laugh.

ELIZA. Perhaps you'd rather her ladyship and me and you had a talk over old times together—

I've got some letters to show her. I wonder if *she'd* laugh.

HOPKINSON. You said you'd burnt 'em—you see there's no depending on you.

ELIZA. Receivings is keepings.

HOPKINSON. Look here—Eliza—what is—has got to be—and what might have been—can't—if you follow me—of course you're bound to be a bit nasty—that's only in nature—but—(*putting his arm round her*)—I have known you reasonable—not often—but now and again—and if there's any little business you might care to embark on—requiring a—small capital—

(THE DUCHESS *comes on in long cloak,* R. U. E.)

of course, I know you've got savings of your own.

THE DUCHESS. Mr. Hopkinson!

HOPKINSON. (*not hearing*) Savings to a tidy amount—but I might put something to 'em—and—

THE DUCHESS. Mr. Hopkinson!

(HE *turns and is transfixed with horror*—ELIZA *after a second's pause—makes a slight courtesy to* THE DUCHESS *and goes quietly but quickly out,* L. 1 E.)

Sorry to inconvenience you but I'm afraid Lady Loxdale will be expecting us.

HOPKINSON. (L. C.) Oh, certainly, Duchess—I'm yours to command—but as regards the young person just now—

THE DUCHESS. Thyra's new maid—yes—I understand you disapproved of her being engaged on the score of economy—but I'm glad to see you've reconsidered your objection.

HOPKINSON *offers his arm nervously*—SHE *takes it—and as they go out together, the curtain falls.*)

ACT III.

(*Library at* THE DUKE'S *according to plan. At rise of curtain,* ELIZA *is discovered looking at wedding presents on table up* C.)

(THYRA *enters hastily, dressed in walking costume,* L. U. E.)

THYRA. Ah, Brown, there you are!

ELIZA. I beg your pardon, my lady, I was taking the liberty of looking at the wedding presents.

THYRA. I wanted you—I'm—going out.

ELIZA. So I see, my lady. (*up* C.)

THYRA. I suppose as it's my wedding day, you think that's an odd thing for me to do? (*above settee*)

ELIZA. Thinking's no part of my duty, my lady—and in such a high family as this—it would be a liberty.

THYRA. There's no doubt, Brown, you *do* know your business.

ELIZA. I hope so, my lady.

THYRA. Well, if anybody wants me—(*crosses over* R., *above table* L.)—say I'm seedy—got a headache—yes—you'd better make it neuralgia.

ELIZA. Neuralgia, my lady!

THYRA. I'm rather hard up just now—I generally am—but—if you'll mask me in till I've got clean away—I'll—

ELIZA. No occasion for that, my lady, thank you—I was wondering if I might make bold to ask a question—

THYRA. Go on. (R. C.)

ELIZA. Is your ladyship coming back?

THYRA. Why do you want to know? (*takes a step towards her*)

ELIZA. It would make it easier for me if your ladyship would trust me a little further—your ladyship may depend on my not answering any questions.

THYRA. (*turns to her*) Well—it's like this—I'm going to keep an appointment—if things go wrong I *shall* come back—if they go right I *may* come back—(*look at each other*)—for a little while—can you dig a meaning out of that?

ELIZA. I fancy so—(*slight pause*)—thank you, my lady.

THYRA. Anyway—you can stay in my service if you care to.

ELIZA. That would depend on circumstances, my lady.

THYRA. All right—now—I'm off—I'm going out by the side staircase—(*going*)—mind if anybody asks—I've *not* gone out. (*crosses* R.)

ELIZA. Of course not, my lady.

(THYRA *goes out,* R. U. E.—ELIZA *stands thinking for a moment—and then is going but is met by* HOPKINSON *who enters* L. U. E. *in wedding costume with a jewel case under his arm.*)

HOPKINSON. Hulloa, Eliza—is that you? (L. C.)

ELIZA. Yes, it's me, Mr. Hopkinson—oh how very pretty you look. (C.)

HOPKINSON. Think so? Yes—one has to have a dash on one's wedding day—(*drops case on sofa*)—well now—have you been thinking since I saw you?

ELIZA. Oh yes.

HOPKINSON. Ah—and I hope you've come round—I'm almost sorry you've seen me in these things—because it may unsettle your mind.

ELIZA. Oh no.

HOPKINSON. I'm glad to hear it—now I do

hope you've given up any notion of going on the honeymoon because I shouldn't be able to bear myself.

ELIZA. It's wonderful to me you're ever able to bear yourself.

HOPKINSON. What say?

ELIZA. Nothing—you needn't worry about the honeymoon—I'm not going with you and Lady Thyra.

HOPKINSON. Well now—that's—that's sense—and as you've come over reasonable I'm sure we can come to terms. As to starting you in that little business, I shan't let an extra pound or two stand in the way, though lately—it's been pay out all round. (*picks up box*)

ELIZA. What's that you've got under your arm?

HOPKINSON. That—oh—that's my present to Thyra—I wouldn't bring it till to-day—can't be too careful—burglars and what not. It's a diamond necklace.

ELIZA. Show it to me.

HOPKINSON. (*hesitating*) Sure the sight of it won't put you off colour again?

ELIZA. Quite sure.

HOPKINSON. (*opening the case*) Well then there—how's that?

ELIZA. Beautiful.

HOPKINSON. Ran me into a pretty figure—but diamonds will always fetch a price—(*crosses over to fireplace* R.)—that's one thing—now I think you'd better step it.

ELIZA. Why?

HOPKINSON. (*leaning on table*)—Because we've got important business to attend to.

ELIZA. Who's we? (*leaning on chair* L. *of table* R.)

HOPKINSON. Myself—and the Duke of Braceborough—and the Honourable Otho Dursingham

—and the Earl of Addleton—and—and myself.

ELIZA. Are they all coming in here?

HOPKINSON. Yes.

ELIZA. What for?

HOPKINSON. Why, to sign the settlements—(*moves to fireplace*)—Smethurst, the lawyer will be here directly.

ELIZA. Oh will he? I'm glad to know that. (*crosses* C.)

HOPKINSON. What's it matter to you?

ELIZA. I was just thinking—that's all.

HOPKINSON. Thinking what?

ELIZA. Nothing.

HOPKINSON. You're very peculiar in your manner, Eliza—

(THE DUKE *comes in,* R. U. E.)

but as this is the last opportunity I may have of settling up with you—

ELIZA. Oh no, it isn't—(*moves down* L. C.)

HOPKINSON. There's no time like the present—and—

THE DUKE. Good morning, Mr. Hopkinson. (R. C.)

(HOPKINSON *turns round—staggered.*)

HOPKINSON. Oh good morning, your Grace—I was just—er—(*to* ELIZA)—that will do—I can't attend to you now. (*takes her up* L. C.)

ELIZA. Perhaps later on?

HOPKINSON. Very well, I'll see to it—(*up* L. C.)—

(ELIZA *goes out quietly,* L. U. E.)

How does your Grace find yourself to-day?

THE DUKE. Fairly well—thanks. (*down* L. *of table*)

HOPKINSON. I was just explaining a few mat-

ters to Thyra's maid but I'm doubtful about her suiting us.

THE DUKE. Are you?

HOPKINSON. She ain't hardly class enough for the place—not to my way of thinking.

THE DUKE. Ah, I never venture an opinion in domestic questions—Has Smethurst come? (*at fireplace*)

HOPKINSON. Not knowing can't say.

(THE DUKE *rings the bell, and sits* R. *of table* R.)

THE DUKE. We may as well find out.

HOPKINSON. Will your Grace cast your eye over this diamond necklace? (*leaning over table*)

THE DUKE. Eh what—oh certainly.

HOPKINSON. Rather of the ratherest, don't you think?

THE DUKE. Very much so.

HOPKINSON. Yes, they're merry little sparklers—(*sits* L. *of table* R.)—I don't believe one man out of a thousand could tell they were Cape.

PARBURY *has come on,* L. U. C.

THE DUKE. And as a matter of fact are they—Cape?

HOPKINSON. Yes they are—but—

THE DUKE. Excuse me—has Mr. Smethurst come?

PARBURY. He has just arrived, your Grace.

THE DUKE. Then show him in here will you?

HOPKINSON. There's a kind of vulgar prejudice in favor of—

THE DUKE. One moment—Parbury—you might let Lord Addleton know we're waiting for him.

PARBURY. Yes, your Grace.

THE DUKE. You were saying something, Mr. Hopkinson.

HOPKINSON. I was saying there's a vulgar prejudice about diamonds being white—but I never listen to foolishness of that sort—I think a dash of yellow color here and there breaks the monotony.

THE DUKE. Perhaps it does.

HOPKINSON. There's the same redicklous objection in some quarters to buying anything second hand—now my respected father suffered a good deal with his feet.

THE DUKE. Did he? Very distressing. (*turns away*)

HOPKINSON. He was a martyr with 'em till he hit upon the idea of wearing second hand boots—

(THE DUKE *looks at* HOPKINSON.)

it isn't everybody would have thought of that.

THE DUKE. Perhaps not—I doubt if the expedient would ever have occurred to "*me.*"

(PARBURY *comes in followed by* SMETHURST, L. U. E.)

PARBURY. Mr. Smethurst.

THE DUKE. Ah, Smethurst—glad to see you. (*rises and crosses* C.)

(PARBURY *goes out.*)

SMETHURST. Good morning, Duke—I hope you're very well. (*moves* C. *to* THE DUKE)

THE DUKE. (R. C.) Very fairly well—(*they shake hands*)—You know Mr. Hopkinson.

SMETHURST. I think I've had the pleasure—

HOPKINSON. (L. *of table* R.) Sir to you—I should like half a word about the settlement—I've been looking through the draft copy—and—

SMETHURST. (*goes to top of table, and opens bag*) Ah—exactly—I shall be at your disposal directly—but, Duke—will you look over this let-

ter from Longhurst—(*gives letter to* THE DUKE, *who crosses over* L.)—it deals with the question of the lease of the sixteen acre farm.

THE DUKE. (*taking it*) Certainly.

HOPKINSON. I say you know—(*up* L. *of table* R.)—Smethurst—that clause about provision for children if any—

SMETHURST. At the proper time, Mr. Hopkinson, I shall be happy to answer any questions—important or trivial—

HOPKINSON. Trivial! (*goes up* C.)

(ADDLETON *comes in,* L. U. E.)

THE DUKE. We shall get to you directly, Mr. Hopkinson—if you'll exercise a little patience—Ah, my dear Addleton—there you are—(*up* L. C.)

ADDLETON. How do you do, Braceborough—well, Smethurst—(*shakes hands*)—good day, Mr. Hopkinson. (*crosses in front of table to arm-chair* R.)

HOPKINSON. How's the noble diaphtagm—settling down?

ADDLETON. I am feeling better—(*sits on chair* R. *of table* R.)

THE DUKE. Ah—(L.)

ADDLETON. But not much better—

THE DUKE. Oh—you slept well? (*sits on settee* L.)

ADDLETON. Only moderately well—the change to a cooler climate is somewhat abrupt—I was conscious—especially towards the small hours of a distinct paucity of blankets.

THE DUKE. Dear—dear—the Duchess will be in despair.

HOPKINSON. (C.) Suffer with cold feet—(*to* THE DUKE, *who turns away*)—that's like me.

ADDLETON. I approached breakfast with a very natural feeling of hesitation, but my misgivings

were quite falsified—in fact I may say I surprised myself.

THE DUKE. (*looking at his watch*) That's capital. (*rises and crosses to* SMETHURST)

ADDLETON. Since then—I have again reverted to a feeling of doubt—there are intermittent moments when I am absolutely in pain.

HOPKINSON. Did you ever try gin and peppermint? (*between* THE DUKE *and* SMETHURST)

ADDLETON. Never, sir.

SMETHURST. May we proceed to business, Duke?

THE DUKE. As far as I am concerned, certainly—but wasn't Dursingham to sign with me as co-Trustee?

(DURSINGHAM *comes in hastily,* L. U. E.)

We might allow a little margin for—oh here he is —very fortunate—

DURSINGHAM. Good morning—don't tell me I'm late—(C.)

THE DUKE. Not at all.

DURSINGHAM. How are you, Lord Addleton—wheels goin' round again? (*moves* C.)

ADDLETON. I am slowly groping my way, Mr. Dursingham.

DURSINGHAM. Keep at it—Hulloa, Hoppy—(L. C.)—you look all a bridegroom—what? Were you gettin' nervous your best man would leave you to fight it out by yourself? (L. C.)

HOPKINSON. Glad to see you, Dursingham. (L.)

DURSINGHAM. Should think you were—I don't know what my duties are—but I fancy I fan you with a towel between the rounds.

SMETHURST. I think that now Mr. Dursingham has arrived we may—

THE DUKE. By all means—you have the papers? (*at table*)

SMETHURST. They are all here. (*at table*)

DURSINGHAM. Is that the signin' business? (L. C.)

THE DUKE. Yes. (*goes up and brings chair down from* R. *of table* C.)

DURSINGHAM. But how about the Duchess—she ought to be in it—what? (*settee*)

THE DUKE. My dear Dursingham—quite so—(*crosses* R. *and rings bell*)—thanks for the reminder—(*rings the bell*)—the Duchess should obviously be present.

(*Slight pause.*)

SMETHURST. (*turns towards table* C.)—A very charming display of wedding presents.

THE DUKE. Yes—(*top of table* R.)—on the whole—I think we may say so.

DURSINGHAM. That's nothing—we've got a whole room full up-stairs.

(PARBURY *comes in,* L. U. E.)

HOPKINSON. Talking of presents I should just like to—(L. *of table* C.)

THE DUKE. One second, Mr. Hopkinson—(R. *of* HOPKINSON—*to* PARBURY) Will you tell the Duchess that we are all here and should be obliged if she could make it convenient to join us.

PARBURY. Yes, your Grace.

(PARBURY *goes out.*)

THE DUKE. I fear I again interrupted you, Mr. Hopkinson—(*sits* R. *of table*)

HOPKINSON. (*coming down* C. *with jewel case*) I was going to ask—of course your Grace has seen 'em—but what does the present company say to this? (*displaying necklace*)

SMETHURST. Oh — very — very — effective. (*takes it*)

HOPKINSON. Yes—I think it's a bit of all right

—may I trouble you to pass it to Lord Addleton—

SMETHURST. Certainly.

(ADDLETON *groans.*)

HOPKINSON. What's gone wrong with him?

THE DUKE. Not feeling ill again?

ADDLETON. Merely an internal spasm—momentary but severe.

HOPKINSON. I've known hot fomentations of poppy heads do the trick something wonderful—there was an aunt of mine—

ADDLETON. There is no necessity for drastic remedies—the feeling is again subsiding.

(THE DUCHESS *comes in,* L. U. E.)

(SMETHURST *has given back the necklace to* HOPKINSON, *who places it among the presents—up* C.)

(SMETHURST *rises.*)

THE DUKE. Ah—that's all right.

THE DUCHESS. Morning, everybody. (*moves* C.)

THE DUKE. We were awaiting your arrival. (R. C.)

THE DUCHESS. Not really—so sorry—how are you, Addleton? (*moves* C.)

ADDLETON. I am only feeling moderately well.

THE DUKE. Quite so—but as the symptoms are rather complex and we're pressed for time—I think Smethurst—that now—

SMETHURST. Certainly, Duke—where will her Grace sit?

THE DUCHESS. That's all right—don't let me keep things about—Oh, I say, Otho—how about this frock? (*crosses over* L. to OTHO)

DURSINGHAM. Extraordinary good I think.

SMETHURST. This is the deed of renewal of

mortgage on the Castle estate with the renewal of loan endorsed.

THE DUCHESS. The shade isn't too light, now you see it in a mass is it? (*turning round*)

DURSINGHAM. Not a bit.

THE DUCHESS. You weren't certain when we chose the pattern?

DURSINGHAM. No—but it's come out a lot better than I fancied it would.

THE DUCHESS. Sure?

DURSINGHAM. Quite.

THE DUKE. (*rises and crosses to* THE DUCHESS) If you've no objection—we might proceed to business.

THE DUCHESS. What?

THE DUKE. I was merely suggesting that we might get on. (*back to table*)

THE DUCHESS. Am I interrupting? So sorry. (*sits on settee* L.)

SMETHURST. (*rises*) The renewal of mortgage between the Duke of Braceborough and the Earl of Addleton—

(HOPKINSON *has come down to* THE DUCHESS.)

HOPKINSON. Good day, Duchess.

THE DUKE. (*rises and crosses* C. *to* HOPKINSON) Really—really—Mr. Hopkinson may I ask you to take that chair—we shall be here all day—

(HOPKINSON *sits left of table—down stage.*)

SMETHURST. (*rises*) Renewal of loan between the Duke of Braceborough and the Earl of Addleton—as in the previous deed the two parties to the agreement solemnly bind themselves and their heirs and assigns—to—I fear the Duchess may find me a little tedious.

THE DUCHESS. Oh no—mousseline de soie.

DURSINGHAM. Pink chiffon.

THE DUCHESS. Oh no—

SMETHURST. It has occurred to me that as no question of a controversial nature is involved the reading of the document is perhaps not necessary.

HOPKINSON. Hear—hear.

ADDLETON. Pardon me, Smethurst—I am by no means certain that my decision to renew the mortgage was not too hastily arrived at.

THE DUKE. What's that? (L. *of table*)

SMETHURST. I beg your pardon, my Lord—

ADDLETON. I am not sure that knowing all the facts of the case I am willing to proceed without further time for reflection.

THE DUKE. How much time do you want? You've had six months.

SMETHURST. I must point out to your Lordship that the existing understanding—

ADDLETON. My agreement to renew the mortgage was conditional—on a certain arrangement which I cannot conveniently discuss under the present circumstances.

THE DUKE. (*rises*) And that arrangement has been carried out on our side—you made stipulations as to the—the credentials of a—a possible aspirant—in a—certain matrimonal direction and we met your views in a financial—and moral sense.

ADDLETON. Some little refinement of manner in the direction indicated was also understood.

THE DUKE. No it wasn't—was it? (*crosses to* THE DUCHESS)

(THE DUCHESS *is talking to* DURSINGHAM, *who is laughing and doesn't hear.*)

(THE DUKE *goes up* C.)

SMETHURST. (*crossing to* THE DUCHESS, L. C.) Your Grace—the Duke is addressing an important question to you.

THE DUCHESS. What's the matter?

SMETHURST. Lord Addleton maintains that in his list of requirements a gentlemanly demeanor was also included—was that so?

THE DUCHESS. Of course it was not—I never gave the smallest guarantee as to that.

THE DUKE. There! (*turns down* C.)

SMETHURST. (*returning to table*) I was certain your Lordship was in error.

ADDLETON. I say average social decency was implied—

THE DUKE. I say it was *not.* (L. *of table*)

HOPKINSON. Don't want to shove my oar into what don't concern me—but as an impartial onlooker—

THE DUCHESS. (*to* DURSINGHAM) Go over and pull them together—

(DURSINGHAM *crosses over to* HOPKINSON.)

HOPKINSON. I was umpire once in a local football match—the Tooting Rovers against Brondesbury United and—

DURSINGHAM. Dry up Hoppy—go over to the Duchess—

(THE DUKE *up* C.)

think she wants to talk to you.

(HOPKINSON *crosses over to* THE DUCHESS.)

Look here Lord Addleton there's bin a lot of bother gettin' this business into focus—some of us have given time and trouble to it which might have been laid out to better advantage—you wanted a rich man—and a moral man and you've got both—I suppose you didn't expect him to be a Dook—

ADDLETON. I did not, sir—I have no desire to ally myself with any more Dukes.

THE DUKE. That's mere offensiveness—(L. *of table*)

SMETHURST. Very uncalled for—

ADDLETON. There has been an element of subterfuge—

THE DUKE. Subterfuge be—dashed—

(THE DUKE *crosses over* R. *behind* ADDLETON'S *chair.*)

SMETHURST. Lord Addleton, you are not justified in imputing motives of an unworthy nature.

DURSINGHAM. (L. *of table*) We're all ridin' together in this particular applecart and if Lord Addleton upsets it over we all go—at this stage of the business it's for him to say whether that's likely to be worth his while—(*slight pause*)

ADDLETON. I have not finally withdrawn from the arrangement—but I have received no tangible proof of Mr. Hopkinson's solvency. He has not yet signed the marriage settlement.

DURSINGHAM. That's soon done—Hoppy—(*rises and crosses over* L. *to* HOPKINSON)

HOPKINSON. Want me? (*rises and crosses* R.)

DURSINGHAM. Yes—

(HOPINSON *crosses hastily to them.*)

Just put your name to the settlement will you? Got it handy, Smethurst?

SMETHURST. (*arranging papers*) I have it here, Mr. Dursingham.

DURSINGHAM. Righto—(*he goes back to the* THE DUCHESS *and sits* L. *of her on settee*)

SMETHURST. This is the deed of settlement which has been discussed and approved—

HOPKINSON. Hold hard—I must chip in there—(L. *of table*)

SMETHURST. What is the matter now, Mr. Hopkinson?

HOPKINSON, There's bin a new clause shoved in about provision to children if any—and—I don't sign till it's made a bit more clear—

ADDLETON. Do you mean to say, sir, you are daring to show hesitation?

HOPKINSON. Daring he blowed—fair's fair—

THE DUKE. My dear Mr. Hopkinson—(*at fireplace*)

HOPKINSON. If this lump of money is to be passed on to a little Thyra or an infant Samuel—without my having a word to say—

SMETHURST. It is in strict accordance with precedent—and was always included in the deed.

HOPKINSON. Think I can't read—it's been chucked in at the last moment.

SMETHURST. I deny it.

ADDLETON. Your conduct is disgusting Mr. Hopkinson.

THE DUKE. You have the personal assurance of Mr. Smethurst.

HOPKINSON. Very likely, your Grace—but lawyers are lawyers—(*sits*)—my late father often said "show me a lawyer and I'll show you a thief."

(SMETHURST *rises angrily.*)

SMETHURST. I must really withdraw from the case—you will kindly place the matter in other hands (*retiring from table, up* C.)

THE DUKE. My dear Smethurst—(*follows him up* C. *and remonstrates*)

THE DUCHESS. Otho, they've got loose—you'd better see to them again.

DURSINGHAM. (*crossing over,* R., *hastily*) Oh Lord goodness—now what is it? (C.)

ADDLETON. Mr. Hopkinson having grossly insulted Mr. Smethurst is unwilling to sign the settlement and is moreover causing a return of my internal disquietude.

DURSINGHAM. (*to* HOPKINSON) Come here. (C.)

HOPKINSON. (*rising*) It's all tommy rot, Dur-

singham. (*rises and moves* C.)

DURSINGHAM. (*taking him aside*) Come here I tell you— do you want to be howled at in every paper and laughed at in every club?

HOPKINSON. Little Thyra or infant Samuel—(C.)

DURSINGHAM. Do you want to be kicked?

HOPKINSON. Well but—

DURSINGHAM. Do you want to be kicked into the street? Because I'll see (C.)—to that.

HOPKINSON. I don't know that I do.

DURSINGHAM. Then tell Smethurst it was only your fun—and sign the paper quick—or what I promised will happen inside two minutes.

HOPKINSON. I'm not one for cherishing bad blood.

DURSINGHAM. All right—here I say Smethurst he wants to kiss and be friends. (*up* C. *a bit*)

SMETHURST. I have no desire to appear unduly sensitive—but if Mr. Hopkinson—

HOPKINSON. I may have spoke too hasty—hope you'll overlook it. (*up* C.)

THE DUKE. To oblige me, Smethurst.

SMETHURST. Mr. Hopkinson's apology is quite sufficient. (*goes back to top of table*)

THE DUKE. I'm sure we're all much relieved. (L. *of table*)

(THEY *return to the table*—DURSINGHAM *again goes over to* THE DUCHESS.)

THE DUCHESS. Rather an awkward team—aren't they? (*on settee* L.)

DURSINGHAM. I know I shall end by kicking Hoppy—I can feel it comin'. (*on settee* L.)

THE DUCHESS. Why not Addleton?

DURSINGHAM. Well there would be more scope with Addleton.

SMETHURST. There is no reason why the two deeds should not be signed simultaneously,

THE DUKE. A very valuable suggestion (L. C.) you have no objection, Mr. Hopkinson?

HOPKINSON. No, your Grace, I'm quite agreeable—

THE DUKE. What do you say, Addleton?

ADDLETON. Braceborough—I am in pain.

THE DUKE. Not coming on again? (C.)

ADDLETON. I greatly fear so.

THE DUKE. Well, I assume we may rely on you after the present paroxysm.

(ADDLETON *groans.*)

SMETHURST. Quite ready, Mr. Hopkinson?

HOPKINSON. Have you got a J. nib? I always use a J.

SMETHURST. Mr. Dursingham—

DURSINGHAM. Hulloa—

SMETHURST. We shall want you.

DURSINGHAM. No rest for the wicked —(*crossing,* R. C.)—what is it now?

SMETHURST. Will you sign this as co-Trustee?

DURSINGHAM. Oh that's better.

HOPKINSON. Where do I put it?

SMETHURST. There—

(HOPKINSON *signs*)

thank you—now put your finger on that seal and say I deliver this as my act and deed—

HOPKINSON. What say?

SMETHURST. You must stand up—I deliver this as my act and deed.

(THE DUKE *pulls* HOPKINSON *up.*)

DURSINGHAM. Get on with it. (L. C.)

HOPKINSON. I deliver—wait a minute—I meant to ask before—who pays for the stamp on this document?

DURSINGHAM. Oh damn. (*goes up* C.)

(THE DUKE *crosses to* THE DUCHESS.)

HOPKINSON. It's all very fine—but—it's a ten and sixpenny touch at least—and— These little things mount up you know—right's right—and I think Lord Addleton ought to—

(ADDLETON *groans.*)

(DURSINGHAM *down again.*)

THE DUKE. We will indemnify you over that, Mr. Hopkinson. (*at table* R.)

HOPKINSON. Very good—then I deliver this as my act and covenant—

SMETHURST. Deed—

HOPKINSON. I deliver this as my act and deed. What rot. (*goes up* C.)

SMETHURST. Thank you—Mr. Dursingham—(*handing pen*)

DURSINGHAM. (*signs*) There that lets you out.

(THE DUKE *signs agreement at table* R.)

SMETHURST. Now Lord Addleton, will you sign the endorsement of the mortgage?

(ADDLETON *groans.*)

ADDLETON. I am in doubt whether I can maintain an erect position.

SMETHURST. Perhaps with a little support.

ADDLETON. Desist sir. Smethurst, you're tickling me.

SMETHURST. (*tries to lift* ADDLETON—*fails*) It will need collective support—Duke may I trouble you?

THE DUKE. Eh what?—Oh by all means. (*crosses to* R. *of table*)

(TOGETHER *with much effort* THEY *raise* ADDLETON, *who groans at intervals.*)

DURSINGHAM. Can I do anything?

HOPKINSON. Shall I lend a hand? (*drops to table*)

THE DUKE. (*gasping*) Give him a pen—the strain is—very appreciable.

ADDLETON. I deliver this as my act and deed.

(DURSINGHAM *puts pen into* ADDLETON'*s hand who signs standing but is held up by* THE DUKE *and* SMETHURST. THEY *then replace* HIM *in chair.*)

SMETHURST. (*wiping his forehead with handkerchief*) Thank you, Lord Addleton.

(HOPKINSON *brings jewel case down from table to* THE DUCHESS, L.)

THE DUKE. (*fanning* HIMSELF) Smethurst, you'd probably like a glass of sherry? (*at fireplace.*)

SMETHURST. Later on, Duke, I shall be glad of it—Mr. Dursingham may I trouble you again?

DURSINGHAM. Righto—(*signs*)

SMETHURST. I am obliged—that releases everybody.

(*During this,* HOPKINSON *has gone up and fetched the jewel case and has shown necklace to the* THE DUCHESS—HE *now returns to table and replaces it.*)

THE DUCHESS. Can we all go? How very nice.

(DURSINGHAM *returns to* HER.)

THE DUKE. Feeling better, Addleton?

ADDLETON. I think Braceborough, there is a lull.

(ELIZA *comes in quietly,* L. U. E.)

SMETHURST. (*who has replaced papers in bag*) Well Lord Addleton I will wish you good day—and a speedy and complete recovery. (*goes up* C.)

ADDLETON. Thank you, Smethurst.

(THE DUKE *joins* SMETHURST, *up* C.)

ELIZA. (*to* THE DUCHESS) I beg your Grace's pardon (C.)

THE DUCHESS. Eh—oh it's you, Brown—Lady Thyra want anything? (*on settee* L.)

ELIZA. No, your Grace—I only wished to ask your Grace what is going to be done about me?

THE DUCHESS. How do you mean?

(HOPKINSON *suddenly catches sight of* ELIZA *and hurries to her.*)

HOPKINSON. What are you doing here? I'm surprised at you Eliza. (L. *of* ELIZA)

SMETHURST. Good bye, Duke.

THE DUKE. Good bye—(*moves to fireplace*)

ELIZA. If you please, is that the lawyer gentleman? (C.)

SMETHURST. Yes, I am a lawyer—what then? (*top of table*)

ELIZA. I don't think you'd better go if you please. (C.)

SMETHURST. Why not?

ELIZA. Not till it's settled what's going to be done about me.

THE DUKE. Who is this?

THE DUCHESS. Thyra's maid.

HOPKINSON. Yes—she's our new maid—but she don't feel up to taking the place—(*aside*)—get out, Eliza. (*steps down*)

ADDLETON. That is the young person I saw last night—and it struck me the attitude Mr. Hopkinson adopted towards her reflected credit on neither.

HOPKINSON. She's a bit hysterical—go along my girl—I'll settle with you afterwards.

ELIZA. If you please, I'd rather settle now.

HOPKINSON. (*to* THE DUCHESS) You know

she's balmy—she ain't responsible for what she says. (*crosses up to* SMETHURST)

THE DUCHESS. What's wrong with you, Brown?

ELIZA. If you please your ladyship, I'm not Brown, I'm Dibb.

HOPKINSON. There she don't know her own name—(*to* SMETHURST)—she's balmy on the crumpet. (L. *of* SMETHURST)

ELIZA. I'm Eliza Dibb—I thought you wouldn't wish to have no scandal.

THE DUCHESS. Scandal?

(ADDLETON *groans.*)

THE DUKE. But what's the point?

SMETHURST. You'd better be a little more explicit. (*moves* C.)

HOPKINSON. There's no occasion for that, she's balmy. (R. *of* SMETHURST)

ELIZA. I used to walk out with Mr. Hopkinson —that was before he came into his money—and he took me to Hampton Court and offered marriage in the maze.

(ADDLETON *groans.*)

It was on a Shrove Tuesday.

HOPKINSON. Balmy—(*to* ADDLETON)

ADDLETON. Silence.

SMETHURST. What proof have you?

ELIZA. Cornelian bracelet—silver locket—and mug—(SMETHURST *takes them*)

SMETHURST. I thought you meant Mr. Hopkinson's photograph?

ELIZA. No—present from Worthing. (*gives him mug*)

SMETHURST. No evidence.

ELIZA. And his letters—

SMETHURST. Oh—(*takes them to table and examines them*)

HOPKINSON. (*following* HIM) You ain't going to read a private correspondence? (*between* ADDLETON *and* SMETHURST)

SMETHURST. As a lawyer, it is my duty to read many such—

HOPKINSON. Very degrading profession. (*goes up* R. C.)

ELIZA. I thought you'd rather I spoke now than in the church—because I *am* a just cause and impediment—and you might have all had to step into the vestry—whereas now if something can be done—I might for ever hold my peace.

DURSINGHAM. (*to* THE DUCHESS) This is a howlin' mess—what?

THE DUCHESS. Nuisance—but everybody's signed—it would have been worse ten minutes ago.

SMETHURST. This demands careful consideration—Dibb—(*rises*)—I should say Miss Dibb—kindly withdraw to the other end of the room will you.

ELIZA. Then I'm not to go?

SMETHURST. By no means.

(ELIZA *goes and sits on chair at back, up* C.)

Duchess, may we have the advantage of your advice?

THE DUCHESS. Come along, Otho. (*sits on chair, table* R.)

(OTHO *chair up table* R.)

(THE DUCHESS *and* DURSINGHAM *join the rest at table.*)

(HOPKINSON *moves* C.)

SMETHURST. Mr. Hopkinson, I am sorry to say several of the letters tend to confirm the young woman's statement.

HOPKINSON. Oh well, as to that—

SMETHURST. One is signed your faithful lover —and husband that is to be—Samuel.

ADDLETON. Disgraceful!

SMETHURST. And below I notice—one—two—yes—fourteen crosses—which I presume possess the usual significance in these cases.

ADDLETON. Disgusting!

HOPKINSON. You might remember I was young and headstrong—but when I stepped up the ladder—I saw my duty and chucked her. (*crosses to settee and sits*)

ADDLETON. Could an action for breach of promise be started with any prospect of success?

SMETHURST. I greatly fear so.

ADDLETON. And this, Braceborough, is the son-in-law you and your wife have foisted on me.

THE DUKE. Confound it, Addleton, what the Devil do you mean by foist?

ADDLETON. What I say, sir—restore that mortgage which I have been swindled into signing.

THE DUKE. Swindled! If you were not an elderly relative, in rather indifferent health, you would be ejected from the premises.

ADDLETON. Restore the mortgage deed, Mr. Smethurst.

THE DUKE. Mr. Smethurst will do nothing of the kind. (R. *of* ADDLETON'S *chair*)

THE DUCHESS. (L. *of table* R.) Addleton, don't you think you'd better go slow—there are tons of people invited to the wedding and the papers have all shouted about it—but what you've got to fix your eye upon is this—It's *your* declaration—it doesn't really matter a straw to *us*.

THE DUKE. Quite so.

ADDLETON. What do you suggest, Mr. Smethurst?

SMETHURST. A compromise.

(ADDLETON *groans*)

DURSINGHAM. Daresay the whole thing can be stewed down into coin.

SMETHURST. There will be no harm in ascertraining the young person's views—(*calling*)—Miss Dibb—

ELIZA. (*rising*) Yes, sir.

SMETHURST. Kindly step this way—

(ELIZA *advances* C.)

What are your ideas as to a possible solatium of a pecuniary description?

HOPKINSON. Yes—Eliza what little sum would you have the face to ask.

ELIZA. Five thousand pounds.

HOPKINSON. What! Why it's redicklous! (*on settee* L.)

SMETHURST. Is that the smallest sum you would accept?

ELIZA. I think the letters are worth it, sir.

SMETHURST. Very well—will you kindly withdraw again—we will consider your offer.

(HOPKINSON *rises*)

(ELIZA *curtseys and goes back to her chair, up* L. C.)

Now what is the general feeling on the subject?

THE DUKE. It's an expensive alternative but as a mere onlooker I should advise agreeing to it. (*looks at* HOPKINSON)

SMETHURST. That is my own opinion.

THE DUCHESS. I think so too.

DURSINGHAM. Pay up Hoppy, and look pleasant.

HOPKINSON. (*rises and crosses to table* R.) It's all right for you to talk that way Dursingham—you've never got into the habit of paying for things—and don't know what it feels like.

(SMETHURST *rises and goes up* R. C.)

ADDLETON. Write a cheque sir, at once.

HOPKINSON. No, I shan't—I'll see her boiled first. (*going up to top of table*)

ADDLETON. Are you again daring to interpose objections?

HOPKINSON. (*at top of table*) I'm not going to take over the whole lump—I'm not the only one in this—it ain't only my credit that has skidded—we're all in it together—fair's fair and I say the amount ought to be pooled.

ADDLETON. Pooled sir! (*leans back*)

HOPKINSON. Pooled.

THE DUKE. (*gets up to top end of table*) Do you suggest we ought to get up a subscription among us—to preserve your reputation.

HOPKINSON. Asking pardon, your Grace—*our* reputation. (L. C.)

THE DUCHESS. Oh no—the Duke and I are out of it.

THE DUKE. Obviously. (*back again to fireplace*)

DURSINGHAM. You ain't goin to hand round the hat to me?

HOPKINSON. I am willing to head the list—tell you what—I'll pay half—twenty-five hundred—but not another bob. (*bangs table*)

ADDLETON. Half sir!

THE DUKE. Mr. Hopkinson!

DURSINGHAM. Pon my solemn soul!

HOPKINSON. I will withdraw—like Miss Dibb—to another corner of the apartment—while you arrange how the rest of it is to be

(SMETHURST *moves to table again.*)

made up. (*goes over and sits by* HIMSELF, *on chair* L.)

SMETHURST. Well now, what is the general view?

DURSINGHAM. Pleasant little gentleman—what?

THE DUCHESS. Of course, it's just a question for Addleton.

ADDLETON. What is a question for me?

THE DUCHESS. Whether squaring it is worth your while.

THE DUKE. That, of course, is the point. (*at fireplace*)

SMETHURST. Precisely.

ADDLETON. Is it even faintly supposed that I am to contribute the balance of the five thousand pounds?

THE DUKE. Well, my dear Addleton, who else should?

SMETHURST. (*rises*) Your Lordship will probably remember how much is at stake—your daughter's painful position in the event of any open scandal—

(ADDLETON *groans.*)

the extreme imminence of the marriage—Mr. Hopkinson ought undoubtedly to furnish the whole sum—but as he appears determined to vie with your Lordship in a spirit of economy—I would really recommend meeting him half way.

ADDLETON. Call him over—I will do as you advise—no constitution would bear such a strain and I must not forget that my grandfather died of apoplexy.

THE DUKE. No—quite so—I should keep it carefully in mind.

SMETHURST. (*rises*) Mr. Hopkinson.

HOPKINSON. (*returning to table* R.) Well how's it to be? Cashier forward or what?

SMETHURST. Lord Addleton consents to make up the—

HOPKINSON. Five thou—?

SMETHURST. The five thousand.

ADDLETON. Under protest.

SMETHURST. Under protest.

HOPKINSON. (*producing cheque book*) All right, where's that J. Pen?

SMETHURST. Lord Addleton, have you your cheque book?

(DURSINGHAM *rises.*)

(HOPKINSON *stands and signs cheque.*)

ADDLETON. (*sadly*) Oh yes.

(HE *and* HOPKINSON *both sign cheque.* HOPKINSON *goes up* C.)

SMETHURST. Miss Dibb, will you again step this way?

ELIZA. (*coming down*) Yes sir—

SMETHURST. We have decided to agree to your price—exorbitant though it is.

ELIZA. Don't you think the loss of Mr. Hopkinson is worth it, sir?

SMETHURST. On that point, I hesitate to offer an opinion—here are the two cheques—(*goes to* HER C.)—each for two thousand five hundred pounds—they are open cheques as I presume you have no Banker?

ELIZA. Not as yet.

SMETHURST. Very well—we shall retain the letters as security—but as to the other things—(*back to table*)—

ELIZA. Oh, I should wish the cornelian bracelet—and the silver locket—and the mug put among the wedding presents—good day, sir.

(SMETHURST *puts things on table* C., R. *of* HOPKINSON.)

SMETHURST. Good day.

ELIZA. (*moves to* THE DUCHESS) Good day,

your Grace—I'm very sorry to have caused your Grace any inconvenience.

THE DUCHESS. Not at all Brown.

ELIZA. Dibb!

THE DUCHESS. Oh yes—of course—not at all Dibb—you only made the best of a strong hand—I should like to have you for a partner at Bridge—Good day.

ELIZA. (*goes up* C.) Mr. Hopkinson—

HOPKINSON. Don't dare to speak to me Eliza—your craving for money is simply sickening—I never wish to see your face again—

ELIZA. I wouldn't make too sure—one never knows what may happen. Good day, Mr. Hopkinson. (*goes up quietly and goes out,* L. U. E.)

THE DUKE. And now I think we may be said to be in smooth water at last.

ADDLETON. I see nothing smooth about it—I prefer the Channel.

THE DUCHESS. I suppose we can all go? (*rises and crosses over* L. C.)

SMETHURST. There is nothing further to detain your Grace.

THE DUCHESS. (*up* L. C., *above settee*) That's a mercy—Oh—I say, Otho, look here—(*crosses over* L. *to* DURSINGHAM.)

THE DUKE. (*crossing to centre*) Very good then, that's quite satisfactory. I must look in at the Club for half an hour. Well, Mr. Hopkinson—we shall meet again shortly under the auspices of Hymen. (*crosses* C., *in front of* HOPKINSON)

HOPKINSON. Hymen, your Grace—does he do the catering—? I thought it was Gunter. (C.)

THE DUKE. Ah—at any rate—it's only a brief "au revoir" (*goes up* C. *to* SMETHURST) Mrs. Smethurst, very well I hope?

SMETHURST. (L. C.) Very, your Grace—she and I are to have the privilege of being included among your guests to-day.

THE DUKE. Are you? I'm delighted—I haven't the faintest idea who is coming—but I shall be charmed to see everybody—good-bye for the present. My dear Gawthorpe!

(*As* THE DUKE *is going,* LORD GAWTHORPE *enters followed by* LADY THYRA, L. U. E.)

THE DUCHESS. Thyra!

ADDLETON. Thyra! (*at fireplace*)

HOPKINSON. Thyra! (*sitting* L. *of table, up stage*)

ADDLETON. What is my daughter doing in such disgraceful company on an occasion like this—or on any occasion.

GAWTHORPE. (*to* THYRA, C.) Don't say anything—leave him to me.

THE DUKE. Probably a casual meeting. (R. C.)

GAWTHORPE. No—we met by appointment—we've just been married.

EVERYBODY. Married!

GAWTHORPE. Thought you'd be astonished, because I don't do this kind of thing as a rule—but when it came to it—Thyra didn't fancy the other arrangement, and so I got a special license and we were married about half an hour ago.

ADDLETON. If I correctly gauge the enormity of—(*at fireplace*)

HOPKINSON. This is a pretty blooming game.

ADDLETON. Kindly permit me to speak, Mr. Hopkinson—if this abominable marriage has really taken place—

GAWTHORPE. There's no doubt about that—we did think of getting away quietly—leaving a note to explain—but the Duke and the Duchess have been unusual good to Thyra—and to me too—

ADDLETON. That I can quite believe.

GAWTHORPE. So we thought it would be more

like cricket to say good-bye instead of leaving a P. P. C.

ADDLETON. Remembering her recent surroundings—it is perhaps not remarkable that my daughter should have cast aside the restraining influence of decency—and—

THE DUKE. Addleton mine is usually an even temper—but— (R. C.)

ADDLETON. And married a man who—

GAWTHORPE. Lord Addleton—(*takes a step forward*)—your daughter could have done better—

THYRA. No, she couldn't! (*steps forward and puts her hand on his shoulder*)

GAWTHORPE. Steady old girl—she could have done better no doubt—but Mr. Hopkinson is here to prove she might have done worse.

HOPKINSON. What say?

ADDLETON. She has married a man whose record for universal profligacy—

GAWTHORPE. Hold on—everybody—Thyra included—knows all about me. She didn't marry me in blinkers—but I've no use for any more of that kind of talk—and while you're digging up records, you might cast your eye back to 1885 when you made London so hot, you must have found Madrid a pleasant change.

ADDLETON. Leave the house, sir!

GAWTHORPE. It isn't your house particularly, but we're going—(*buttoning up his coat*)

ADDLETON. You will never see my face again—

GAWTHORPE. We take that as a promise given in the presence of witnesses. Come along, Thyra—Good-bye, Duke.

THE DUKE. (*shaking hands with them*) My dear Thyra—(*kisses her, back of settee*)—where are you going?

ADDLETON. To the Devil!

GAWTHORPE. Not immediately—Paris first to buck us up—Good-bye, Duchess. (THEY *shake hands*)

(THE DUCHESS *and* THYRA *exit* L. U. E.)

HOPKINSON. Lord Gawthorpe—half a mo—(*rises and crosses to* GAWTHORPE)

GAWTHORPE. What is it, Mr. Hopkinson?

HOPKINSON. Where do *I* come in?

GAWTHORPE. You don't come in—you stop outside. Good day, sir. (*exit*)

(HOPKINSON *moves down to settee and sits* R.)

SMETHURST. (*coming down*) I ventured to remain Duke, during the recent family discussion, because I thought a legal difficulty might arise but now—

THE DUKE. (C.) My dear Smethurst—very considerate of you—and if Addleton will only see things in a reasonable light—(*crosses* R., *in front of* SMETHURST)

ADDLETON. (*advancing*) To you, Braceborough, I have nothing more to say—but I am also glad Mr. Smethurst has not withdrawn prematurely, because I have a painful duty to perform.

THE DUKE. What painful duty?

ADDLETON. It is my intention to repossess myself by force if necessary (*goes for bag*) of that mortgage deed which was obtained by fraud—

(SMETHURST *gets bag.*)

THE DUKE. Fraud! (*crosses behind* ADDLETON'S *chair and moves* R.)

SMETHURST. I fail to understand, Lord Addleton. (R. C.)

ADDLETON. Give up that, bag sir—(*seizing it*)

THE DUKE. Certainly not—(*trying to hold* ADDLETON *back*)

SMETHURST. I shouldn't think of such a thing—

(*There is a struggle.*)

ADDLETON. Give me that bag, Mr. Smethurst.

THE DUKE. Hold on to it, Smethurst.

SMETHURST. Rely on me, Duke—(*struggling*)

HOPKINSON. How about my marriage settlement?

SMETHURST. (L. C.) I really can't answer legal questions at a moment like this.

HOPKINSON. Then, I'll have a cut in! (*down stage, also seizing bag*)

SMETHURST. Desist Mr. Hopkinson—

(*Start going round.*)

(DURSINGHAM *comes down to* HOPKINSON.)

DURSINGHAM. Come off, Hoppy.

(HOPKINSON *renewing attempt.*)

ADDLETON. It is useless to struggle, Mr. Smethurst—I am, I believe, the weightier man—(*also renewing attempt*)

THE DUKE. (*holding him back*) Addleton, remember your apoplectic grandfather—

HOPKINSON. Little Thyra or infant Samuel.

SMETHURST. I have never been subjected to such treatment—

(THEY *all sway round during this—talking loudly and incoherently*—SMETHURST *with a violent effort throws* THEM *off.*)

SMETHURST. Lord Addleton—in reference to your unwarrantable attack—I have merely to say this—that if, after consultation with a medical man, I find I have sustained any internal injury, which is by no means impossible—you will hear from me—Mr. Hopkinson your fears are groundless as to the settlement which ceases to be valid.

(*Enter* THE DUCHESS, L. U. E.)

HOPKINSON. That's a bit of cabbage stalk out of the dust bin. (*sits* R. *of settee*)

SMETHURST. Good day, Duke. (*going up* L. C.)

THE DUCHESS. Have something before you go?

SMETHURST. Nothing, I'm obliged to you—I've—had—far more than I require—good day your Grace.

THE DUCHESS. Good day.

(SMETHURST *goes*, R. U. E.)

(THE DUKE *and* THE DUCHESS *and* DURSINGHAM *meet up* C.)

HOPKINSON. (*sitting on settee* L.) Good day—jolly bad day for me—(*takes out note-book*)—Well my Lord—(*To* ADDLETON)—you've copped the Cleopatra, but look at me—loss of Thyra—who don't seem to know her own mind—Dursingham's thousand—that don't look rosy—twenty-five hundred to Eliza Dibb—

ADDLETON. (*rises and crosses to* HOPKINSON) Eliza Dibb—that brings another nefarious detail to my recollection—surely Mr. Hopkinson you will refund my two thousand five hundred?

HOPKINSON. Refund! You will have your little joke, my Lord.

ADDLETON. (L. C.) Joke sir! But I will not trouble you—I shall at once stop the cheque—(*going up* C.)

THE DUKE. Not going, Addleton? (R. C.)

ADDLETON. Yes, Braceborough—I am—and in shaking the dust of your draughty and disreputable mansion from my feet—I must insist that all further intercourse between us may finally cease.

THE DUCHESS. (*steps forward*) We are quite

ready to meet you over that. It's the first really sensible suggestion you've made.

ADDLETON. I shall seek the purer atmosphere of Claridge's Hotel.

(LORD ADDLETON *glares all round and goes solemnly out*—HOPKINSON *sits left—looking over his note book—the other three form a group with their backs to him.*)

THE DUKE. (*up* R. C.) Well now, the present state of affairs will want a little reconsideration.

THE DUCHESS. (*up* C.) Not to any great extent—Otho dear boy—go and send wires and put everybody off, will you? And afterwards, you might lunch me somewhere.

DURSINGHAM. Quite right—we shall have earned it. Dook—got any change? (*up* C.)

THE DUKE. Afraid I haven't.

DURSINGHAM. (*going*) Ta ta—Hoppy—got any change about you?

HOPKINSON. No.

DURSINGHAM. I'm not angry with you, old man. It was a forlorn hope.

(DURSINGHAM *goes out quickly,* L. U. E.)

THE DUKE. I'm running away for a week or two—some—friends of mine are going to Monte Carlo.

THE DUCHESS. The Daubeneys?

THE DUKE. Yes.

THE DUCHESS. My dear fellow, quite so—good bye, if I don't see you before you start.

THE DUKE. You'll make my adieus to our friend there—

(THEY *shake hands.*)

THE DUCHESS. Oh yes, you needn't bother.

THE DUKE. Thanks—good-bye. (*he goes,* R. U. E.)

THE DUCHESS. (*comes down to* HOPKINSON) Well, Mr. Hopkinson, I'm afraid our Alpine climbing hasn't shaped well. I undertook to haul you up the mountain, and I hauled for all I was worth, and, if we didn't get there, it was because the rope broke, so you mustn't blame the guide. I wish you better luck next time.

(SHE *holds out her hand*—HE *takes it*—SHE *goes up a few steps.*)

HOPKINSON. Of course, your Grace, I haven't made at all a good thing of it—

(SHE *turns and looks at* HIM.)

I was just reckoning up how much I'm out of pocket—

THE DUCHESS. Really? I'm sorry—If you remember I warned you—you might find us rather expensive, but you must try to think as pleasantly of us as you can. Good-bye.

HOPKINSON. (*a little cowed*) Good-bye, your Grace.

(SHE *goes.*)

(HE *crosses to chair* R., *and again adds up figures in his note book.*)

(ELIZA *comes in cautiously in doorway* L.)

ELIZA. Mr. Hopkinson!

HOPKINSON. (*startled*) Is that you, Eliza?

ELIZA. Yes—don't you think you'd better marry *me?* I've come into money.

HOPKINSON. (*eagerly*) Have you cashed those cheques?

ELIZA. Yes.

HOPKINSON. Both of 'em?

ELIZA. Both of 'em.

HOPKINSON. Go and wait for me round the corner and we'll talk it over.

(ELIZA *goes out as she came—quietly and rapidly.* HE *rises, looking more cheerful, and puts away his note book—then buttons up his coat and goes towards upper door—there he turns sharply as if struck by sudden thought—goes to table where the presents are laid out—takes the case containing his necklace—opens it—shuts it again—puts case under his arm and goes deliberately but jauntily towards the door—as he does so the curtain falls.*)

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